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A-League Round 14&15 Friday 4th Jan - Sunday 6th Jan 2013

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GOALS GALORE HERALD NEW YEAR CELEBRATIONS FOOTBALL IS FIREWORKS!

This Week's Line Up



ROAR & PHOENIX
SOUVENIR POSTERS
Page 14&15



HAL ROUND 14
REWIND
Page 5



BFTP:
JOHN FILAN
Page 20



V-LEAGUE:
ROUND 10&11
Page 21


MAIN PHOTO: ANITA MILAS



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Tours To Italy

Season Set To Sizzle As Race For Title Heats Up



Photo: ANITA MILAS

Get ready to turn up the heat as the A-League prepares for the second half of the season. GW's ANDREW BISHARA takes a look at how your team has fared so far and what may lay ahead.

Adelaide United: Completely reborn since the second coming of John Kosmina, the Reds are sitting second after finishing last season in second last. In his first stint in the club, Adelaide were a strong defensive unit, build for the counter attack. Not much has changed since then, instead, this time around, Kosmina has loaded up his side with a fresh new offensive threat to give his team that extra firepower. The return to form of Dario Vidosic has been a bonus for the Reds. So too, the arrival of Argentine exports, Jerónimo Neumann and Marcelo Carrusca have added an extra flair. Defensively, they are just as good, and given space for the counter, they will punish their opposition. Second place can hardly be a failure in the eyes of many Reds fans, but given their potential they have, a maiden title win definitely isn't out of reach. Especially given their newfound Kosmina-like determination for winning. **A+**

Brisbane Roar: What happened to last season's champions? Just sneaking into sixth place, the Roar has real struggled this term to replicate their irresistible form over the previous two years. After Ange Postecoglou's departure, the Brisbane board thought it was best to promote assistant coach, Rado Vidosic into the manager role. The

so-called "brains" behind the sublime football of the Roar, it was seen as a easy transition, similar to Barcelona's ethos of changing the manager, but not the football mantra. Eleven games into the new reign, and Vidosic was pushed to take the position of technical director with Mike Mulvey was given the job. Time will tell if he makes a positive impact. The problems with the Roar is the lack of goals; struggling to put away their numerous chances. Also they seem to miss Postecoglou's never-say-die attitude. Finals might be struggle if they click into a consistent gear soon. **C-**

Central Coast: Continued where they left off last season. Defensively sound, Graham Arnold has let the shackles go and the Mariners have become a more offensive unit. The form of leading golden boot striker, Daniel McBreen best sums up how much the Mainers have changed this season. So too the emergence of new whiz-kid Tomas Rogic. Still though, they are the toughest defensive team in the league, able to hold on to one-nil leads like ease. After claiming the Premiers Plate last season and falling short to capture their first Championship. Don't expect them let up soon. Top of the League at the half way mark of the season, the chasing pack might close in, but fans can hardly complain so far. Favourites for the title. **A**

Melbourne Heart: Fans and critics alike saw this season as the breakthrough for the Heart. Making the finals last

season, meant that this should have been another year of progress. They have never really managed to get a sequence of good performances this season and the Heart are dismal in getting the three points. Numerous times they have blown winning position and have always themselves to blame. Considering their list of players, they should be in a higher position. But why are they struggling? Is it the experience of John Aloisi? Or the lack of effort from the players? To be honest, it's a bit of both: Aloisi's inexperience is telling, yet the likes of Fred, David Williams, Dylan Macallister, and Matt Thompson, have failed to perform on a consistent basis. Emerging stars in the form of Josip Tadic and Aziz Behich and the growing experience of Aloisi shows their potential there for success, but it will be very tough. Can still make the finals. **C-**

Melbourne Victory: Everyone wonder how long it would take for the Victory players to full-heartily take on board the Postecoglou football mantra. Quick, slick, possession based football is the name of the game here. After a dismal start (and the horrendous 5-0 loss to Brisbane) the Victory have bounced back superbly so far. Fourth place and well within the reach of second place, there is potential. Problems are though, they can't consistently get the style going week-in-week-out yet, and defensively they are too loose. However, their offensive players, especially breakout start Marco Rojas is the reason the Victory have pinched their wins this season. Credit is due to Postecoglou for giving his team that never-say-die spirit. Who could forget the 3-2 comeback

over Sydney? Or the 2-1 win over the Heart? They will make the finals, but Postecoglou is merely laying the building blocks for future success. **B+**

Newcastle Jets: Watching their bitter rivals sitting on top spot must be tough for Jets fans. "Inconsistent" would be best word to sum up the season for the Gary Van Egmond's side. They have showed moments of brilliance, but haven't turn up for others. Their Achilles' heel is their very poor defence record, conceding 28 goals already so far, which has cost them in games. A five game winless streak really put a dent in their finals charge despite them currently sitting seventh. They need to turn their up-and-down form into a stellar run to ensure a place in the finals. The signing of Emile Heskey looks to be the deal of the season producing with seven goals so far, but more importantly has become the focal point for the Jets. Without him, the Jets would be in a far worse position. **C**

Perth Glory: Last year's runners-up are currently sitting in fifth on the ladder. They are struggled to replicate last year's run, in which they finished third and found themselves in the Grand Final. Their over-reliance on hitman Shane Smeltz has meant that they have really suffered in the goal-scoring department. Only three times this season have their score more than one goal in a game – all three which ended in wins. And that's been their problem. Defensively, the Glory has been as good as the

Central Coast Mariners and Western Sydney, but the lack of another solid goal scorer on the team has really hurt the Glory. Sitting in fifth means they are well within the chance of getting into another finals series, but coach Ian Ferguson will need his side to produce more, if they really want to make an impact in March next year. **C**

Sydney FC: What did Alessandro Del Piero walk himself into? The much-generated hype of the arrival of the former Juventus man was suppose to herald in the new age at Sydney FC. Instead, they are last on the A-League table. A complete rabble of a team, with the worst defensive in the competition and sadly, the over-reliance on a 37-year old marquee signing to produce the winning goods. The Sky Blues, with manager Tony Crook leaving the club six rounds into the season, have looked to former Socceroos boss, Frank Farina to rekindle their season. The task for Farina is massive and while there is only a three points gap between last and sixth; with morale so low, it would be a tremendous effort if Sydney were to make the finals. Farina therefore is laying the groundwork for next season. For a team that many thought would be challenging for the title, this is a very poor season for everyone there. **D**

Wellington Phoenix: If it weren't for the Westpac Stadium, the Phoenix would not be in seventh position and in contention for the finals. One away win in six outings, compared to four wins at home (their only four wins so far this season)

means that when they travel to Australia, the Phoenix aren't the same side. But shouldn't we already expect this from Ricki Herbert's side? They can sit next to the Newcastle Jets – a side plagued by inconsistency. On their day, Wellington can turn it on and cause a whole lot of grief for their opposition. However, when they don't turn up, they are toothless outfit. Last year, they limped into the finals series, doing just enough to finish in fourth. If they want to improve themselves and become a worthy challenger to the title, Herbert has to mould his team into a more determined unit and finally get those away wins. **C**

Western Sydney Wanderers: Which Wanderers fans thought their beloved team in their first year in the national competition would be sitting third and battling for title? Could you raise your hand? The Wanderers have been the biggest surprise this season, showing a combative spirit in every game, a willingness to work for each other and a desire to fight for every point. They have the second best defence (behind the Mariners, of course) only conceding 11 goals so far. Credit is due to the recruitment policy of the football department, bringing in experienced campaigners like Ante Covic, Michael Beauchamp, Nikolai Topor-Stanley and Mark Bridge. As well as coach, Tony Popovic. For him to marshal a team together in such a effective unit, only after spending a year together (and playing against lower league opposition), you couldn't ask for more. A genuine title contender, don't write them off just yet. **A+**

Reading look to sign Rogic

Premier League side Reading have had a bid in the region of \$600,000 confirmed for emerging Central Coast Mariners' star Tom Rogic.

The 20-year-old Socceroo has been one of the standout players in the opening half of the A-League season and looks set to be on his way to England, with Reading reigniting their off-season pursuit of the playmaker. Rogic, who is out of contract in May, has only to agree personal terms for the deal to be ticked off according to Mariners chairman Peter Turnbull.

"We have been in discussions with Reading and both clubs are fairly satisfied with what's on the table and now it's up to Tom to reach a personal agreement with Reading," Turnbull told The World Game.

Turnbull admitted his regret at seeing Rogic depart the Mariners but said the A-League leaders' hands were tied and could ill-afford to lose him for nothing when his contract expires.

"I am not going to say what the figure is but there is an agreement there. Of course we don't want to see him go," he said. "I'd like to have Tommy here for another six years because he's a special player."

"But the reality is that quality Australian players will always want to test themselves overseas where they can command the salaries and exposure they cannot command here."

"You have seen it with the Harry Kewells, Brett Emertons, Lucas Neills, Jason Culinas and so many more over the years."

"We could keep Tom here until May when his contract expires but then he could leave for nothing, and we as a club would be out of pocket. It's a situation where hands are really tied."



Tom Rogic could be in Reading FC colours before too long.

"The way things are now I would expect that things will be resolved by the end of the week concerning Tom and it may be that he will decide to stay, though considering his past association with Reading perhaps that would be unlikely."

The Royals tried in vain to sign the Canberra-born Rogic just over a year ago after spotting him at England's Nike Academy, but the deal fell through when he was refused a work permit by British authorities.

Reading manager Brian McDermott is said to be preparing an appeal should Rogic's work permit be rejected for a second time, leaving the remainder of January

to iron out all the details.

McDermott's side are staring down the barrel of relegation to the Championship, with the newly promoted club five points adrift of safety over halfway through the Premier League season.

If a deal is completed, Rogic would become the third Australian on Reading's books along with goalkeeper Adam Federici and 19-year-old attacker Ryan Edwards.

Rogic has appeared 24 times in two seasons for the Mariners and earned the first of his three international caps in a 1-0 win over Hong Kong in early December last year.

Captain Commits To The West

NRMA Insurance Western Sydney Wanderers captain Michael Beauchamp has signed with the Hyundai A-League club for the 2013/14 season, it was announced this week.

Beauchamp, 31, who played his junior football in Sydney's western suburbs, said it was great to be staying at the Wanderers.

"It really means a lot to me to get another opportunity to play under (coach) Tony Popovic and be part of the squad," Beauchamp said.

"It has been a great season so far and there is more to come."

"What is happening here at the Wanderers is something special and it is terrific to be part of it for next season."

"It is a credit to the club, coaching staff and the boys to get the results we have achieved and to get out and represent the west of Sydney like we have."

"We have something that does not come around very often. We came together very quickly and we have developed a winning mentality and that is driving everything at the club."

Central defender Beauchamp joins fellow member of the stingi-

est defence in the Hyundai A-League, goalkeeper Ante Covic, in committing to the future of the club in the past week. Midfielder Mateo Poljak also recently signed for 2013/14.

Popovic said Beauchamp had shown real leadership qualities in the Wanderers' first year.

"Michael has been outstanding for us in defence this season," he said.

"We always felt he would be a very good leader and he is showing that as captain on and off the field."

"We are very pleased he has signed for another season and even at his age, and with his experience, he is improving all the time."

Executive chairman Lyall Gorman said Beauchamp was a priority signing for the Wanderers.

"Michael walks and talks what this club is about," Gorman said.

"He is from the heart of western Sydney and he leads the club by example in his calm, determined and professional manner."

"His game has gone to a new level under Tony's coaching and week in and week out he is one of our most consistent players."



Michael Beauchamp (centre) has plenty to smile about lately.

Heart signs Edwards

Melbourne Heart FC confirms the signing of promising midfielder Cameron Edwards on a senior contract for the remainder of the 2012-13 Hyundai A-League season.

Edwards, 20, joins Heart after impressing coaching staff during a two-week training stint with the Club in December.

Edwards signed with Championship side Reading in 2011 where he developed into a dynamic left-footed central midfielder, before playing out his contract and joining the Nike Football Academy in July 2012.

Edwards has spent the last six months training with the Nike Academy in England, following in the footsteps of Academy graduate Tomas Rogic, who joined A-League leaders Central Coast Mariners in January.

Melbourne Heart General Manager, Football Operations, John Didulica praised Edwards' pedigree stating he would add



extra depth to the senior squad.

"Cameron is a hugely talented left-sided midfielder with a professional work ethic and he has the capacity to be a great acquisition for the Club," Didulica said. "It is not easy to find silky left-sided players with elite experience, so we are happy Cameron has chosen to continue his football development with Heart."

Edwards will wear the number three jersey.

McGowan bound for China



SOCCEROO defender/midfielder Ryan McGowan (pictured) will leave Scotland for China later this week to discuss personal terms with Super League side Shandong Luneng Taishan.

The Chinese club is understood to have agreed a fee worth around \$630,000 with Scottish Premier League club Hearts for the 23-year-old.

The Hearts star has attracted interest from a number of clubs in the Far East as well as England and Europe. In August McGowan seemed set to

join Rangers then readying for life in Third Division but changed his mind at the last minute and decided to stay with the Tynecastle outfit.

Since joining Hearts in 2006, McGowan has had loan spells with Partick Thistle and Ayr United.

However, over the past two seasons he has established himself as a first-team regular at Hearts.

He won his first full Socceroo cap in the friendly defeat to Scotland in August.

McGowan's younger brother Dylan also plays for Hearts.

WSW Signings

NRMA Insurance Western Sydney Wanderers players Adam D'Apuzzo and Shannon Cole signed with the club for the 2013/14 season.

D'Apuzzo, 26, and Cole, 28, both said they were thrilled to continue their involvement with the Wanderers because they believed they were part of something big.

"I am over the moon to be part of the Wanderers for another year so I can continue to be part of something that is very special," D'Apuzzo said.

"There is fantastic morale among the team and to be part of a group of players that are such good personalities and humble at the same time is amazing."

"Everything is heading in the right direction and I am learning a lot from a very experienced coaching staff. To see the support we are getting from what feels like the entire west of Sydney has been an amazing experience so far and I just want to be a part of it."

Japan's Kashiwa Reysol To Join Mariners in ACL

CENTRAL Coast Mariners will face J-League outfit Kashiwa Reysol in the 2013 AFC Champions League Group Stage after the Chiba-based Club defeated Gamba Osaka 1-0 in Japan's Emperor's Cup Final.

Hirofumi Watanabe's 35th minute goal was all that separated the two teams at Tokyo's National Stadium.

Kashiwa participated in the 2012 version of Asia's top club competition, making it through to the second round of the prestigious annual tournament.

Indeed, the 'Sun Kings' only bowed out of the competition to eventual AFC Champions League winners Ulsan Hyundai of the Korea Republic in the round of 16, losing 3-2 at the Ulsan Munsu Football Stadium.

Kashiwa's triumph in Tokyo means the men from Chiba join the Mariners, as well as Korea's Suwon Bluewings and China's Guizhou Renhe in Group H of the 2013 AFC Champions League.

Central Coast Mariners commence their 2013 continental campaign in Gosford against Suwon Bluewings on Wednesday 27 February, and will travel to Japan for matchday 2 against Kashiwa on Wednesday 13 March.

Kashiwa Reysol play their football out of the 16,000 capacity Kashiwa Soccer Stadium and finished the 2012 domestic season in sixth place. The Club were crowned J-League Champions in 2011.



Injury forces Boogaard out of Jets clash

Adelaide United FC central defender Nigel Boogaard will miss Saturday's match against the Newcastle Jets due to a hamstring injury.

Scans this morning revealed Boogaard has a low grade hamstring tear which he suffered in the 3-0 win over Sydney FC on New Years Eve and resulted in him coming from the field in the 64th minute.

The diagnosis effectively rules the 26 year old out of the trip to Hunter Stadium to tackle the Jets, his hamstring to be continually assessed meaning the club cannot put a specific time frame on how long he will be out of action.

Boogaard has started in all but one of the Reds' 14 matches so far this season.



The Wanderers' next home game will be against Central Coast Mariners on January 6 at Parramatta Stadium at 6pm.

Kids will be allowed in for free and there will be a "Wander and Kick" opportunity held on the pitch after full time.

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VICTORIA'S LEADER IN TEAM WEAR

SCOREBOARD

TABLE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts
1 Central Coast Mariners	14	9	3	2	23	10	13	30
2 Adelaide United	14	9	1	4	24	17	7	28
3 West Sydney Wanderers	14	7	2	5	17	11	6	23
4 Melbourne Victory	14	7	2	5	24	26	-2	23
5 Perth Glory	14	5	3	6	14	12	2	18
6 Brisbane Roar	14	5	2	7	17	16	1	17
7 Wellington Phoenix	14	4	4	6	19	20	-1	16
8 Newcastle Jets	14	5	1	8	19	28	-9	16
9 Melbourne Heart	14	4	3	7	17	20	-3	15
10 Sydney FC	14	4	1	9	16	30	-14	13

THIS WEEK	ROUND 15	FIXTURE	VENUE	LOCAL	AEDT
Sat Jan 05	Sat Jan 05	Newcastle Jets v Adelaide United	Hunter Stadium	5:30pm	5:30pm
Sat Jan 05	Sat Jan 05	Melbourne Victory v Wellington Phoenix	AAMI Park	7:45pm	7:45pm
Sat Jan 05	Sat Jan 05	Perth Glory v Sydney FC	nib Stadium	6:45pm	9:45pm
Sun Jan 06	Sun Jan 06	Melbourne Heart v Brisbane Roar	AAMI Park	4:00pm	4:00pm
Sun Jan 06	Sun Jan 06	W Sydney Wanderers v CC Mariners	Parramatta Stadium	6:00pm	6:00pm

NEXT WEEK	ROUND 16	FIXTURE	VENUE	LOCAL	AEDT
Fri Jan 11	Fri Jan 11	Adelaide United v Perth Glory	Hindmarsh Stadium	7:00pm	7:30pm
Sat Jan 12	Sat Jan 12	Melbourne Victory v Central Coast Mariners	Aurora, Launceston	5:30pm	5:30pm
Sat Jan 12	Sat Jan 12	Newcastle Jets v Brisbane Roar	Hunter Stadium	7:45pm	7:45pm
Sun Jan 13	Sun Jan 13	Wellington Phoenix v W Sydney Wanderers	Westpac Stadium	4:30pm	2:30pm
Sun Jan 13	Sun Jan 13	Sydney FC v Melbourne Heart	Allianz Stadium	5:00pm	5:00pm

ROUND 14 RESULTS

Brisbane Roar 2 (Berisha 14, Halloran 59)
Wellington Phoenix 1 (Brockie 37)
Crowd: 11,358 @ Suncorp Stadium

Western Sydney Wanderers 2 (Ono 42, 79)
Melbourne Victory 1 (Dilevski 72)
Crowd: 13,659 @ Parramatta Stadium

Melbourne Heart 2 (Mebrahtu 6, Tadic 26)
Newcastle Jets 1 (Griffiths 18)
Crowd: 5641 @ AAMI Park

Adelaide United 3 (Vidosic 18, 28, Ramsay 61)
Sydney FC 0
Crowd: 10,934 @ Hindmarsh Stadium

Central Coast Mariners 1 (Ibini 68)
Perth Glory 0
Crowd: 14,591 @ Bluetongue Stadium

TOP GOAL SCORERS

10 - Daniel McBREEN (Mariners)
Jeremy BROCKIE (Phoenix)
9 - Marco ROJAS (Victory)
8 - Dario VIDOSIC (Adelaide)
7 - Emile HESKEY (Jets)
6 - Besart BERISHA (Roar)
5 - Alessandro DEL PIERO (SFC)
Mark BRIDGE (Wanderers)
Ryan GRIFFITHS (Jets)
Archie THOMPSON (Victory)



Wellington's Jeremy Brockie (centre) joins Daniel McBreen at the top of the charts after scoring 3 goals (2 v Heart, 1 v Roar) over the Christmas fixtures.

A-LEAGUE TEAM OF THE WEEK FESTIVE SEASON

Compiled by
Steven Talevski



GK: Michael Theo – Only conceding two stunning goals to Jeremy Brockie and Steven McGarry, Theo helped Brisbane Roar pick up six points and took them back into sixth position on the table.

RB: Ivan Franjic – After playing in the centre of defence, Mike Mulvey moved Franjic into his preferred position of right back where the Roar defender helped Brisbane on the attack while also keeping their defence tight and helping them back into the top six.

CB: Michael Beauchamp – The Wanderers captain was a solid rock in the centre of defence these past two weeks against Adelaide United, Melbourne Victory and the tough trip to Perth where he lead a group of fringe players to an impressive point.

CB: Trent Sainsbury – Sainsbury helped the Mariners cement their spot on top of the table during the festive season with great performances in all three games including a tough trip across the ditch to Wellington and the New Year's Eve clash against Perth Glory.

RB: Adama Traore – The Ivorian born defender pressed his claims as the best left back in the competition by making continuous attacking threats and tight defending which saw him play a crucial part in the Victory's derby winner against the Heart.

CDM: Ruban Zadkovich – The Jets may have only picked up one win but their captain was in outstanding form shielding the back four and helping out in

attack which included a good strike from outside the penalty area against the Victory.

RAM: Dario Vidosic – Adelaide's number ten scored three goals this festive season and was outstanding against Sydney FC on New Year's Eve.

CAM: Shinji Ono – Ono staked his claim as import of the season with two impressive performances that included three stunning goals including a terrific winner against Melbourne Victory.

LAM: Marco Rojas - #KiwiMessi was trending all festive season as the youngster bagged three terrific goals and claimed two assists.

ST: Jeremy Brockie – The New Zealand international scored three goals this period including a stunning long range effort against Brisbane Roar.

ST: Emile Heskey- Heskey was back in goal scoring form this period scoring two goals in three games as the former English international was a constant threat.

Coach: Tony Popovic – Despite making numerous changes game by game this festive season, Popovic was able to collect seven points in three games proving the depth of his Western Sydney Squad. The terrific period kicked off with a stunning 6-1 smashing of Adelaide United before an impressive one all draw against Perth with a line-up of fringe players before returning home to beat the inform Melbourne Victory.

Star Man

Shinji Ono
Western Sydney



He may have missed the away trip to Perth, but Ono was outstanding in the two games he played in against Adelaide United and Melbourne Victory. His man of the match performance against the Victory saw two of the best goals this season and showed why the Wanderers went for him as their Marquee.

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CC Mariners



1

Perth Glory



0

Match Details

Central Coast Mariners 1 (Ibini 68')

Perth Glory 0

Bluetongue Stadium, Gosford

Attendance: 14,591

Referee: Strebrel Delovski

Central Coast Mariners: 1. Mathew Ryan (Gk), 3. Joshua Rose, 4. Pedj Bojic, 5. Zachary Anderson, 8. Adriano Pellegrino (9. Bernie Ibini 53'), 11. Oliver Bozanic (13. Brent Griffiths 88'), 14. Michael McGlinchey (c), 16. Trent Sainsbury, 18. Nick Montgomery, 21. Mile Sterjovski, 23. Adam Kwasnik (19. Mitchell Duke 80')

Substitutes not used: 20. Justin Pasfield (Gk)

Yellow cards: Ryan 87'
Red cards: Nil

Perth Glory: 1. Danny Vukovic (Gk), 3. Bas van den Brink, 5. Steve Pantelidis, 7. Jacob Burns (c), 8. Dean Heffernan, 9. Shane Smeltz (12. Ryo Nagai 85'), 10. Liam Miller, 13. Travis Dodd (4. Billy Mehmet 71'), 14. Steven McGarry, 19. Joshua Risdon (6. Nick Ward 71'), 21. Scott Jamieson

Substitutes not used: 30. Lewis Italiano (Gk)

Yellow cards: van den Brink 58', 76', Burns 89', Vukovic 94'
Red cards: (van den Brink 76')

The Hand of God Strikes Again?

By Adrian Deans

I didn't have to write a preview for this game, but if I had, I would have predicted a first win for the Glory at Bluetongue. How could you do otherwise when the Mariners were missing Rogic, Hutchinson, Zwaanswijk and McBreen? Especially after the way the Sydney midfield closed down the Mariners midfield last round.

If the young Sydney FC midfield could close down the marauding Mariners, then what might the Glory – with arguably the best central pairing in the league (Burns and Miller) – do when the Mariners were so depleted?

We had to wait a while to find out. The first half was a dour affair in which two teams nervously circled each other in sweltering conditions and few shots were struck in anger. The Mariners defence looked as solid as ever but they seemed uncertain going forward and obviously missed the influence of Rogic – even if only for the fact that he tends to attract so much attention, thus freeing up the midfield for the likes of Montgomery, McGlinchey and the wide backs.

And yet, despite the tentative play of the patchwork Mariners, Perth were unable to take advantage. If the Mariners were flat then the Glory were even flatter – always hitting a wall whenever they got to the Mariners' third. I can't remember Ryan making a save – although Shane Smeltz managed to miss an absolute sitter from McGarry's cross.

But it all changed in the second half. The Mariners finally took charge and started to find their attacking rhythm – moving the ball with pace and purpose. Rose and McGlinchey began to combine down the left and gradually the arm wrestle was dominated by the home side.

Mind you, with so many non-regular starters in the team there were



Bernie Ibini celebrates with Pedj Bojic after nicking the winner to start the New Year's fireworks. Photo: KAREN DOUGLAS

bound to be some players off the pace. Adam Kwasnik was offside in a couple of important situations and in the 63rd minute jumped for a ball he was never going to get but which would have fallen perfectly for Ibini.

Fortunately, it didn't matter. Just 5 minutes later, Ibini beat Jamieson to Bozanic's cross – controlled the ball somehow – and chipped it over the onrushing Vukovic.

Perth made no complaint and there are no genuinely definitive camera angles, but it sure looked as though Ibini had handled the ball. It is possible that the ball just hit him in the stomach and his arm moved in reflex response, but if I

was a Glory supporter I'd be filthy.

On the other hand (ahem) the Mariners deserved the lead on the balance of play.

It was up to Perth to really come out of their shells with 20 minutes to play and the stage was surely set for young Japanese star Ryo Nagai – who had looked awfully good on debut a week earlier. But disaster struck on 75 minutes when Bas Van Den Brink received a second yellow for a foul on Sterjovski and Perth were down to ten.

Perth continued to limp abjectly towards defeat but finally Nagai made his entrance on 85 minutes but was never really sighted. The final action of note was another rasping

shot from Pedj Bojic which nearly crept through Vukovic's legs in the same way Bojic embarrassed Clint Bolton a couple of weeks ago.

In the end it was an unlikely victory, given the players out and the good recent form of the Glory, but once again it demonstrates the excellent depth of the Mariners and the capacity of the entire squad to play the one system – giving Arnold options all over the park.

Once again Trent Sainsbury was superb and Zac Anderson deputised brilliantly for Zwaanswijk. Anderson would walk straight into any other back two.

The question now for the Mariners is who will survive the January

Sales. This time last year they were well ahead of 2nd place but after the sale of Matt Simon and Rostyn Griffiths just limped over the line for the Premiership and didn't win a game in the Finals.

It would be nice this year if a January sale could take effect in June.

Adrian Deans is the author of Mr Cleansheets – published by Vulgar Press, distributed by Dennis Jones and Associates and available in all good book stores. www.mrcleansheets.com

	Match Stats	
0	Saves	1
2	Attempts on target	0
5	Attempts off target	3
50%	Possession	50%
2	Corners	1
6	Offsides	3
11	Fouls committed	16



Adam Kwasnik's header beats Danny Vukovic, but alas the linesman raises his flag to rule the effort offside. Photo: KAREN DOUGLAS



Matt McGlinchey and Jacob Burns engage in a bout of Greco-Roman wrestling as Steve Pantelidis closes in. Photo: KAREN DOUGLAS



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Adelaide United



3

Sydney FC



0

Match Details

Adelaide United FC 3 (Vidosic 19'/29' (pen), Ramsay 62')
Sydney FC 0
 Referee: Jarred Gillett
 Crowd: 10,934 @ Hindmarsh Stadium

Adelaide United: 1.Eugene Galekovic (gk) (c), 3.Nigel Boogaard (22. Fabio Ferreira 64'), 5.Iain Fyfe, 6.Cassio, 8.Marcelo Carrusca (7.Zenon Caravella 63'), 10.Dario Vidosic, 11.Bruce Djite, 14.Cameron Watson, 16.Daniel Bowles, 17.Iain Ramsay (21.Jeronimo Neumann 74'), 23.Evan Kostopoulos
 Substitutes not used: 20.Paul Izzo (gk)
 Yellow Cards: Kostopoulos 34', Cassio 90+3'
 Red Cards: Nil

Sydney FC: 20.Vedran Janjetovic (gk), 2.Sebastian Ryall, 7.Brett Emerton, 8.Adam Griffiths (28. Aaron Calver 14'), 12.Blake Powell, 15.Terry McFlynn (c), 17.Terry Antonis (24.Hagi Gligor 58'), 18.Trent McClenahan, 21.Yairo Yau (27.Alec Urocevski 58'), 23.Rhyan Grant, 26.Peter Triantis
 Substitutes not used: 33.Matthew Nash (gk)
 Yellow Cards: Calver 77'
 Red Cards: Nil

Reds respond with comprehensive win over SFC

By Nic Kerber

The New Years Eve party started early at Hindmarsh Stadium as Adelaide United FC ended 2012 with an emphatic 3-0 win over a youthful Sydney FC.

Dario Vidosic continued his potent scoring form with a first half brace before Iain Ramsay celebrated his return to the team with a goal just after the hour mark. Almost just as significantly, the game also saw the Reds record their first clean sheet since Week 7.

As comprehensive as the result was, it could have been even more lopsided as the home side peppered the Sky Blues goal in the second half, Vidosic unlucky not to get his hat-trick as he was denied twice by the woodwork.

Sydney FC Coach Frank Farina may have been forced to field a relatively young and inexperienced side that was not helped when Adam Griffiths was forced off the field with an injury early in the game, but the Reds still had to execute and bounce back after two defeats, and they duly obliged as they returned to the winners list.

The result sees Adelaide United end the year in second place with over half of the season now gone, two points behind the Central Coast Mariners who defeated Perth Glory 1-0 earlier in the night.

Without injured marquee signing Alessandro Del Piero, Sydney FC started well enough as lively forward Yairo Yao tried to bend one into the top corner after five minutes, the ball landing on the roof of the net.

Bruce Djite, who was again a colossus up front, created the home side's first chance in the 9th minute, his left footed shot missing the target.

Sydney FC's ploy of long route one football to Yau almost paid dividends in the 16th minute, United's defence made to make some desperate last ditch defending as the game was evenly poised.

But the game then turned in United's favour as Vidosic met an inviting Cassio cross, the midfielder's header not powerful but deadly accurate as it looped inside the top corner, his seventh goal of the season.



	Match Stats	
1	Saves	2
7	Attempts on target	2
14	Attempts off target	8
59%	Possession	41%
5	Corners	1
5	Offsides	3
8	Fouls committed	16

Dario Vidosic was on target twice for the Reds to put the South Australians back on the winners list. Photo: ADAM BUTLER

Ten minutes later Vidosic had his and the Reds' second as he expertly converted a penalty after Djite was brought down in the box by Sebastian Ryall.

With a two goal buffer, Djite went less than a metre away from extending the advantage as he loaded up and sent a shot just wide, before Evan Kostopoulos went even closer as he watched his stinging volley cannon into the crossbar less than a minute later.

The Reds' dominance continued after the break, Vidosic missing a great chance to score his hat-trick as he uncharacteristically blazed a shot

over the bar.

The third goal arrived in the 62nd minute after Djite did brilliantly to harass and pressure Ryall, his presence enough for the Sydney defender to lose his footing. With time and space, Djite aimed a shot past Janjetovic, the Sydney keeper doing well to keep it out but the ball fell into the path of Ramsay who had the simplest of tap ins.

Their tails up, the Reds then went in for the kill, Ramsay inches away from his second as the Sydney defence came under siege.

Vidosic was then denied again as his cracking free kick rattled the cross-

bar in the 73rd minute, while Djite was also left without a deserved goal by some desperate Sydney defending.

Substitute Zenon Caravella came on and was his busy tenacious self in his 100th A-League appearance, the Sydney goal turning into a firing range as Vidosic was again left frustrated by the woodwork.

The Reds would have to be content with a 3-0 score line but Coach John Kosmina knows a win is a win regardless and was pleased that his side could send the home fans away happy and welcome in the New Year with three points.

"Sydney had a fair crack at us early on, we survived that, got back in the game, scored and went on with it, and that was important," Kosmina said.

"Sydney had a young team out there, relatively inexperienced, and we could have maybe got more out of it, but the fact is we went on with the first half and we created a lot of opportunities in the second and with any luck we could have had seven or eight or even more."

The Reds' next match is away against the Newcastle Jets on Saturday 5 January 2013 at Hunter Stadium.



Adelaide United's Bruce Djite hits the turf hard which results in a penalty being awarded to the home side. Photo: ADAM BUTLER



Sydney FC keeper Vedran Janjetovic comes to collect on this occasion. Photo: ADAM BUTLER

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Melbourne Heart

MELBOURNE HEART



2

Newcastle Jets



1

Match Details

Melbourne Heart 2 (Mebrahtu 6, Tadic 26)
Newcastle Jets 1 (Griffiths 18)
 Crowd: 5641 @ AAMI Park

Melbourne Heart: 2. Michael Marone, 4. Simon Colosimo, 5. Fred (17. Jason Hoffman 86'), 6. Patrick Gerhardt, 8. Matt Thompson, 10. Josip Tadic (9. Dylan Macallister 64'), 11. Richard Garcia, 13. Jonathan Germano, 14. Golgol Mebrahtu (15. David Williams 73'), 16. Aziz Behich, 20. Andrew Redmayne

Unused Subs: 1. Clint Bolton

Yellow Cards: Redmayne 17'

Newcastle Jets: 2. Scott Neville (22. Adam Taggart 85'), 4. Josh Mitchell, 8. Ruben Zadkovich, 9. Emile Heskey, 11. Connor Chapman, 12. Joshua Brillante (18. Jacob Pepper 58'), 13. Sam Gallaway, 15. Craig Goodwin, 17. James Virgili, 20. Mark Birighitti, 23. Ryan Griffiths (7. James Brown 66')

Unused Subs: 1. Ben Kennedy

Yellow Cards: Birighitti 25', Goodwin 44', Gallaway 45+3', Heskey 87'

Tadic and Mebrahtu strikes secure important win

By Julius Ross

Melbourne Heart FC celebrated the start of a new year in the best possible fashion with a 2-1 win - and three much-needed points against Newcastle Jets at AAMI Park.

Josip Tadic set up one and then scored another, either side of a Ryan Griffiths penalty, as Heart ground out a result in a close encounter with Gary Van Egmond's side, which lifts Heart two places up the table into eighth position.

Golgol Mebrahtu continued his hot streak of form for the Red and White, latching onto a measured through-ball from Tadic in the seventh minute, following a turnover of possession instigated by Heart's captain Fred, and netting his third goal in five matches.

Scorer of a sublime free-kick against Phoenix last week, Mebrahtu showed poise to slip the ball through Jets keeper Mark Birighitti's legs for the opener.

Heart were pegged back when Jets equalised 11 minutes later, after Ryan Griffiths was brought down by Heart's debutant keeper Andrew Redmayne, and the Newcastle midfielder converted the resulting spot kick in the 18th minute.

But in an almost carbon-copy situation, Birighitti was guiltily of the same misdemeanour, bringing down Heart's Jonatan Germano for a penalty in the 26th minute.

Tadic stepped up to bury what proved to be the winner, as Heart held on for the remaining 64 minutes for its fourth win of the season.

The visitors made one alteration to its starting line up from its narrow 3-2 loss against Melbourne Victory, but it was Heart that made sweeping changes - with six changes from its match against Wellington Phoenix last Thursday.

Dominic Ritter was ruled out of the clash and replaced by Scott Neville for Newcastle, while Heart welcomed back Aziz Behich, Richard Garcia, Simon Colosimo and Patrick Gerhardt.

Head Coach John Aloisi also reintroduced Germano to the starting

line-up, while he handed Redmayne his first start for Heart, promoting the 23-year-old keeper at the expense of regular Clint Bolton.

After Mebrahtu's opener, the match almost went pear-shaped for Redmayne when he brought down Griffiths following a probing through ball from former England international Emile Heskey.

Redmayne was cautioned for his challenge and was sent the wrong way by Griffiths' spot kick, but he redeemed himself with a number of stand-out saves later in the match to help Heart to victory.

Heart's second goal was set in motion after a clever flick over the Jets' defence from Josip Tadic, who sent the ball into the path of both Birighitti and Patrick Gerhardt.

Birighitti spilled the ball under a challenge from Gerhardt and in the aftermath, dragged Germano's legs from behind to give referee Chris Beath no choice but to point to the spot.

Tadic's penalty was emphatic from the spot, driving high into the roof of the net for the decisive blow.

Both teams had plenty of chances to add to the scoreline in the first period as a dangerous cross from the right from Mebrahtu in the 31st was headed centimetres wide of the target from Germano.

Former Heart winger Craig Goodwin nearly proved nemesis for his former side in added time of the first time, firing a stinging drive which seemed destined for the top corner, only for Redmayne to tip the effort over the bar with a fantastic save.

Redmayne continued his fine form in the second half, saving a downward header from Heskey in the 48th minute, before Goodwin again tested the Heart stopper in the 55th minute.

The pace of the game lessened in the second period, as substitutions flew thick and fast and Dylan Macallister, who replaced Josip Tadic, had the best chance of the second half, forcing a save from Birighitti with a powerful low effort.

The win gives Heart momentum ahead of Sunday's clash against Brisbane Roar against AAMI Park.



M	Match Stats	J
3	Saves	1
6	Attempts on target	5
6	Attempts off target	6
53%	Possession	47%
6	Corners	5
6	Offsides	1
9	Fouls committed	14

Golgol Mebrahtu's is adorning himself to Heart fans with his goal scoring prowess.

Photo: ANITA MILAS



Former EPL star Emile Heskey shows his strength in the air. Photo: ANITA MILAS



Ricahrd Garcia congratulates Joesph Tadic for his goal, which ultimately proved to be the winner. Photo: ANITA MILAS

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Roar Celebrate New Year with a Top Six Spot

Brisbane Roar



2

Wellington Phoenix



1

Match Details

Brisbane Roar 2 (Besart Berisha 14', Ben Halloran 59')
Wellington Phoenix 1 (Jeremy Brockie 37')
 Tuesday, 1 January 2013
 Venue: Suncorp Stadium, Brisbane
 Kick-Off: 7:30pm Local (8:30pm Aedt)
 Referee: Tim McGilchrist
 Crowd: 11,358

Brisbane Roar: 1. Michael Theo (Gk), 2. Matt Smith (C), 3. Shane Stefanutto, 5. Ivan Franjic, 6. Erik Paartalu, 7. Besart Berisha, 10. Henrique (24. Nick Fitzgerald 60'), 11. Ben Halloran (4. Matt Jurman 86'), 15. James Donachie, 17. Mitch Nichols, 22. Thomas Broich, Substitutes NOT Used: 8. Massimo Muroccia, 20. Matt Acton (Gk)
 Yellow Cards: James Donachie 39', 85', Erik Paartalu 41', Besart Berisha 75'
 Red Cards: James Donachie 85'

Wellington Phoenix: 1. Mark Paston (Gk), 2. Manny Muscat (6. Alex Smith 76'), 3. Tony Lochhead, 7. Leo Bertos, 11. Jeremy Brockie, 12. Tyler Boyd, 16. Louis Fenton (10. Stein Huysegems 70'), 17. Vince Lia, 18. Ben Sigmund, 21. Dani Sanchez (9. Benjamin Totori 68'), 22. Andrew Durante (C)
 Substitutes Not Used: 30. Griffin McMaster (Gk)
 Yellow Cards: Tyler Boyd 45+1', 63'
 Red Cards: Tyler Boyd 63'

By Jarrod Ellis

Brisbane Roar is in the Hyundai A-League top six for the first time since round three following a 2-1 win over Wellington Phoenix in the New Year's Day clash at Suncorp Stadium.

Both sides were reduced to ten men in the open encounter, teenagers Tyler Boyd (Wellington) and James Donachie (Roar) sent off for two yellow cards, as Brisbane recorded its first back-to-back wins of the campaign.

The Roar's starting eleven and bench were unchanged from their Boxing Day win over Adelaide United at Hindmarsh Stadium while Wellington Head Coach Ricki Herbert also opted for the same squad that beat Melbourne Heart five days ago.

The home side attacked with purpose from the outset and in particular, Besart Berisha looked eager to find his first goal from open play since November.

The Albanian striker's perseverance in front of goal paid off within the first quarter hour of play when Thomas Broich put pressure on the Wellington defence just inside their half, winning the ball and playing it through for his teammate. Berisha cut inside the oncoming defender, striking the ball cleanly with his left foot to hand Brisbane the early advantage.

The Phoenix were not without chances of their own in the first half - youngster Louis Fenton sent a header wide of the post on two occasions - but it took something special for the away team to find an equaliser.

Taking a free-kick quickly, Wellington's man of the moment Jeremy Brockie found himself in space 25 yards out from goal and unleashed a powerful shot that gave Roar goalkeeper Michael Theo no chance of saving.

While Brisbane weren't as dominant as the second half began, the



Ben Halloran is the toast of the town after hitting the winner for Brisbane Roar. Photo: ADRIAN GAGLIONE

men in orange began creating more clear cut chances in front of goal. Eight minutes in, Halloran cut back the ball for Berisha whose first time shot forced a quick save from Mark Paston in the Wellington goal before the players switched roles on the hour.

This time, after receiving the ball from Broich, Berisha played provider to Halloran, who from the edge of the area, played a clever shot past Paston to reinstate the Roar's lead.

At 2-1 up, Brisbane seemed likely to hold onto their lead when the Phoenix's Boyd was sent off three minutes after the goal - the 18-year-old receiving his second yellow card from debutant referee Tim McGilchrist for a foul on Shane Stefanutto.

Broich had a chance to put the game to bed as the 80 minute mark approached, the German midfielder easing his way into space down the left wing and shooting straight at Paston, when the better option

might have been to play in one of his oncoming teammates.

The Roar were also reduced to ten men before the match was over, central defender Donachie picking up his second caution late in the half but Brisbane held on for a vital set of three points.

"We created a lot of chances, which was good, but we gave away far too many opportunities for the opposition," Brisbane Roar Head Coach Mike Mulvey said in his post-match

press conference.

"We allowed them back in the game, even though it was a wonder strike, we were asleep at a quick free kick.

"We've got a no excuses policy so we're not going to make any excuses about anything and what I am especially pleased about was that we got the win at the end of the day.

"That's a testament to the players in the dressing room because they fought it out right until the end."



Shane Stefanutto and Jeremy Brockie go head-to-head in this particular challenge. Photo: ADRIAN GAGLIONE



Besart Berisha starts the New Year with a bang and adds to his tally in the quest for another Golden Boot. Photo: ADRIAN GAGLIONE



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PICS OF XMAS ROUNDS

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Jets Line Up

1. Ben Kennedy (gk)
2. Scott Neville
3. Tiago Calvano
4. Josh Mitchell
5. Dominik Ritter
7. James Brown
8. Ruben Zadkovich
9. Emile Heskey
10. Bernardo Ribeiro
11. Connor Chapman
12. Josh Brillante
13. Sam Gallaway
14. Taylor Regan
15. Craig Goodwin
16. Jobe Wheelhouse
17. James Virgili
18. Jacob Pepper
19. Michael Bridges
20. Mark Birighitti
22. Adam Taggart
23. Ryan Griffiths
25. Mitch Cooper
- *seven to be omitted

Ins: Tiago Calvano (promoted), Dominik Ritter (promoted), Bernardo Ribeiro (promoted), Taylor Regan (promoted), Jobe Wheelhouse (return from injury), Michael Bridges (promoted), Mitch Cooper (promoted)

Outs: Nil
Unavailable: Ben Kantarovski (knee)

Newcastle Jets v Adelaide United

Sat Jan 05 Hunter Stadium 5:30pm

By Shaun Dyas

The Newcastle Jets face Adelaide United on Saturday afternoon at Hunter stadium in a pivotal game for both sides as the race for finals positions heats up.

Newcastle has been in the top six for most of the season before falling out recently after a succession of games where they have played encouragingly without reward.

Adelaide also suffered a slight dip in form but rectified that on New Year's Eve with a commanding 3-0 victory over a hapless Sydney FC. They will now travel to Hunter Stadium full of confidence, having already beaten the Jets 2-0 at the ground earlier in the season.

Newcastle's performances have started to improve but they go into the match coming off consecutive losses to both the Victory and Heart at AAMI Park.

Newcastle have been guilty of coughing up possession too cheaply when playing out from the back with the Heart's second goal on New Year's day a fine example.

Whatever combination at the back Gary Van Egmond goes with in this game will have to improve in this area.

Adelaide, with players like Jeronimo Neumann and Dario Vidosic are absolutely lethal on the counter attack and any errors from the home side will be justifiably punished.

Join the conversation on Twitter using the hash-tag #JETSvREDS



Referee: Matt Gillett

Desperate Jets face High-Flying Adelaide

ABC Radio Coverage - Online & 1233 Newcastle following cricket coverage

The Odds

Jets 2.70
Draw 3.40
AUFC 2.56

ished.

The home side will again rely on the grunt and engine of stand in skipper Ruben Zadkovich to inspire his troops in what could be a make or break period in their season.

The Jets have their next two fixtures at home and will need to win both to ensure they remain in touch with the top six.

They will need a big performance from their marquee man Emile Heskey in order to do this. He has been in good form for the Jets since swapping England and the premiership for the A-League and has been crucial in the Jets fortunes.

Apart from the recent clash against the Victory, every time the striker has scored for the Jets they have gone on to win the game which just underlines his importance to the team.

Newcastle may well welcome back their regular skipper Jobe Wheelhouse for this fixture which will provide them with extra steel and will be a welcome relief to Van Egmond.

He may well be needed as the Jets are facing a selection dilemma in the fullback positions with both Scott Neville and Dominik Ritter unlikely to play due to injury. Zadkovich may again find himself shifted to right back to cover for

Neville or it could present an opportunity for someone like Taylor Regan to come back into the fold. The area where this match will be won though is in defence. Newcastle simply must give themselves a chance in this game by restricting Adelaide. The Jets have conceded at an average of two goals a game and have failed to keep a clean sheet all season.

How Van Egmond would like it to occur in this game as a belated Christmas present.

Kiss of Death
Jets 1-1 AUFC



Adelaide Utd Line Up

1. Eugene Galekovic (gk) (c)
2. Osama Malik
4. Jon McKain
5. Iain Fyfe
6. Cassio
7. Zenon Caravella
8. Marcelo Carrusca
10. Dario Vidosic
11. Bruce Djite
12. Antony Golec
14. Cameron Watson
16. Daniel Bowles
17. Iain Ramsay
20. Paul Izzo (gk)
21. Jeronimo Neumann
22. Fabio Ferreira
23. Evan Kostopoulos
- *two to be omitted

In: Osama Malik (promoted), Jon McKain (promoted), Antony Golec (promoted)

Out: Nigel Boogaard (hamstring – 1-2 weeks)

Unavailable: Nil



Victory Line Up

1. Tando VELAPHI (GK)
2. Matthew FOSCHINI
3. Adama TRAORE
5. Mark MILLIGAN
6. Leigh BROXHAM
8. Jonathan BRU
9. Marcos FLORES
10. Archie THOMPSON
11. Marco ROJAS
14. Billy CELESKI
16. Theo MARKELIS
17. Jimmy JEGGO
19. Isaka CERNAK
21. Spase DILEVSKI
23. Adrian LEIJER
24. Nick ANSELL
26. Andrew NABBOUT
39. Nathan COE (GK)
- *three to be omitted

Ins: 5. Mark MILLIGAN (returns from suspension), 16. Theo MARKELIS, 17. Jimmy JEGGO, 19. Isaka CERNAK (all promoted)

Outs: 7. Gui FINKLER (injured)

Unavailable: Diogo FERREIRA (injured), 7. Gui FINKLER (knee)

Melb Victory v Wellington Phoenix

Sat Jan 05 AAMI Park 7:45pm

By Andrew Bishara

If there is one team that the Wellington Phoenix does not like playing against, let alone travel to, is Melbourne Victory. In their previous five games against the blue side of Melbourne, they have only recorded one win, back in January 2011, at Westpac Stadium.

A narrow loss to the Brisbane Roar in the last round really hurt the Phoenix, considering they had the chances to steal the points. They now are sitting seventh, a point behind Brisbane, who overtook them after their win. The match descended into a farce with red cards to both sides slowing down the game. It shouldn't be a surprise that Wellington dropped points: away from Westpac Stadium, the Phoenix has found it difficult to get points.

Coach Ricki Herbert was admitted post-match, that his side missed their chance: "We certainly had good signs in the first half. I thought we had some really good opportunities to maybe get ourselves well in front."

Melbourne on the other hand is coming off a rather disappointing loss to the Western Sydney Wanderers. It could be said that it coming, despite grabbing two wins very important (and very late!) wins over rivals, the Heart and the Newcastle Jets, Victory weren't up to their usual standards.

ABC Radio Coverage - 774 & ABC Local Radio Victoria Grandstand Digital Melbourne and Online

The Odds

Victory 1.95
Draw 3.85
Phoenix 4.85

Join the conversation on Twitter using the hash-tag #MVvNIX



Referee: Ben Williams

Phoenix face daunting Victory task

In both games, they let leads slip, only to rescue in the last couple of minutes in both games. They were outplayed in the second half against an Emile Heskey led Newcastle and were lucky to get the win. In the derby, the Heart had the better chances and failed to capitalise, before Archie Thompson saved the day.

Tony Popovic's Wanderers were rampart against the Victory, who looked completely flat, considering the intensive festive period. The loss was expected and it could be a good thing. Under the pump, Ange Postecoglou has the ability to make his team bounce back. And who better to do it against

than the Wellington Phoenix, who throughout the history of the A-League has only beaten the Victory twice.

Three dropped points wasn't the only thing that the Victory lost. Brazilian playmaker Gus Finkler, now an integral part of the offensive unit, was hauled off after seven minutes due to injury. It is believed a medial ligament strain to his knee, with scans to be done later this week. He could be out of the game, but they will welcome the return of Mark Milligan after his two-game suspension.

As for the Phoenix, there was relief with Leo Bertos and Alex Smith both being cleared of seri-

ous injury and will feature against the Victory. Teenage striker Tyler Boyd will miss because of his red card.

Travelling again for the second consecutive week could mean a few tired legs for Herbert's men. Can he make his men raise their game again? As for Melbourne, will Postecoglou spark his men to life? A couple of days rest could be a helpful, plus backed by a ever-vocal Melbourne crowd, the Victory should be able to grab three more points here.

Kiss of Death
Victory 2-0 Phoenix



Phoenix Line Up

1. Mark Paston (GK)
3. Tony Lochhead
5. Michael Boxall
6. Alex Smith
7. Leo Bertos
9. Benjamin Totori
10. Stein Huysegems
11. Jeremy Brockie
15. Cameron Lindsay
16. Louis Fenton
17. Vince Lia
18. Ben Sigmund
21. Dani Sanchez
22. Andrew Durante (C)
30. Griffin McMaster (GK).

In: 5. Michael Boxall (promoted), 15. Cameron Lindsay (promoted).

Out: 2. Manny Muscat (omitted), 12. Tyler Boyd (suspended).

Unavailable: 8. Paul Ifill (ankle injury four to five weeks).

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Glory Line Up

1.Danny Vukovic (gk)
4.Billy Mehmet
5.Steve Pantelidis
6.Nick Ward
7.Jacob Burns (c)
8.Dean Heffernan
9.Shane Smeltz
10.Liam Miller
11.Adrian Zahra
12.Ryo Nagai
13.Travis Dodd
14.Steven McGarry
15.Brandon O'Neill
17.Chris Harold
18.Jesse Makarounas
19.Josh Risdon
21.Scott Jamison
30 Lewis Italiano (gk)
*three to be omitted

Ins: 11.Adrian Zahra,
15.Brandon O'Neill, 17.Chris
Harold, 18.Jesse Makarounas
(all promoted)

Outs: 3.Bas van den Brink
(suspended)

Unavailable: 16.Evan Berger
(hamstring – indefinite),
23.Michael Thwaite (calf – 3
weeks).

Perth Glory v Sydney FC

Sat Jan 05 nib Stadium 9:45pm

By FFA

It was a poor end to 2012 for both these sides with the Glory going down 1-0 to Central Coast while Sydney were outclassed by Adelaide 3-0 on New Year's Eve. But with a new year brings a fresh start and both these clubs could do with the three points in this one.

For the fifth-placed Glory it's a chance to cement their spot in the top six while the Sky Blues (last spot) are running out of time to make a charge for the finals.

The Glory have a bit of a crisis in defence with their two starting centre-backs Michael Thwaite (injured) and Bas van den Brink (suspended) both unavailable.

But that's nothing compared to the injury woes of Sydney whose medical staff have been working overtime during the festive period to try and get their stars back on the field.

The likes of Pascal Bosschaart, Adam Griffiths and Fabio are all out but there is some respite with Alessandro Del Piero, Jason Culina, Joel Chianese and Ali Abbas all expected to return for the trip west. When the two sides met earlier this season the Sky Blues came from a goal down at the break to win 2-1 after Steve Pantelidis was sent off early in the second half.

The Big Issue

Perth: The Glory started the season as one of the competition favourites but are only just hanging

ABC Radio Coverage - 720 Perth & Local Radio WA, Grandstand Digital & online

Referee: Kris Griffith-Jones



Glory and Sky Blues Hope for New Year Cheer

The Odds

Glory 1.66
Draw 3.80
SFC 5.50

Join the conversation on Twitter using the hash-tag #PGvSYD

onto a place in the top six at the moment. Ian Ferguson's troops have been horribly inconsistent so far this campaign, with an impressive win too often followed up by a poor performance.

If the Glory can fix this problem they'll be contenders again but if not they'll be simply making up the numbers for the rest of the season.

Sydney: The Sky Blues have endured a horror injury toll this season and while it can't be totally to blame for their poor season it certainly hasn't helped.

With the halfway point of the season gone, Sydney are running out of time to get into the finals picture

and unless they can start getting a few more of their stars back on the field then they may as well start planning for 2013/14.

The Gamebreaker

Shane Smeltz: The New Zealand international has been well below his goal-scoring best so far this season but Smeltz is very rarely kept quiet for too long. This could spell bad news for the Sky Blues on Saturday night.

There is no better finisher in the A-League than Smeltz on his day and with the Sky Blues potentially fielding a below strength defence, this could be the day the former Gold Coast man rediscovers his

mojo.

It's hard to tip either of these two sides with any great confidence given their inconsistent form of late and injuries problems, particularly in defence. For that reason though there should be a few goals in this one.

The Glory played all over the Sky Blues when they met at ANZ Stadium but paid the price for not taking their chances, with Pantelidis' dismissal turning the game on its head. If the home side can produce a similar effort this time, they should be too strong.

**Kiss of Death
Phoenix 1-3 Mariners**



Sydney FC Line Up

2. Sebastian Ryall
6. Jason Culina
7. Brett Emerton
10. Alessandro Del Piero
12. Blake Powell
15. Terry McFlynn
16. Joel Chianese
17. Terry Antonis
18. Trent McClenahan
20. Vedran Janjetovic (gk)
21. Yairo Yau
22. Ali Abbas
23. Rhyan Grant
24. Hagi Gligor
25. Daniel Petkovski
26. Peter Triantis
27. Alec Uroevski
28. Aaron Calver
33. Matthew Nash (gk)
* four to be omitted

In: Alessandro Del Piero (returns from injury), Ali Abbas (returns from suspension), Jason Culina (returns from injury), Joel Chianese (returns from injury), Daniel Petkovski (promoted).

Out: Adam Griffiths (knee - 2 weeks)

Unavailable: Pascal Bosschaart (calf - 2 weeks), Ivan Necevski (ankle - 3 weeks), Paul Reid (ad-ductor - 1 week), Fabio (ankle - 1 week), Nathan Sherlock (ham-string - 2 weeks)

MELBOURNE HEART



Heart Line Up

1.Clint Bolton (Gk)
2.Michael Marrone
4.Simon Colosimo
5.Fred (c)
8.Matthew Thompson
9.Dylan Macallister
10.Josip Tadic
11.Richard Garcia
13.Jonatan Germano
14.Golgol Mebrahtu
15.David Williams
16.Aziz Behich
17.Jason Hoffman
18.David Vrankovic
20.Andrew Redmayne (GK)
21.Steven Gray
22.Nick Kalmar
24.Sam Mitchinson
25.Jeremy Walker
26.Ersin Kaya
*five to be omitted

Ins: 21.Steven Gray, 22.Nick
Kalmar, 24.Sam Mitchinson,
25.Jeremy Walker, 26.Ersin
Kaya
Outs: nil
Unavailable: 23.Mate Dug-
andzic (broken foot – season)

Melbourne Heart v Brisbane Roar

Sun Jan 06 AAMI Park 4:00pm

By Jarrod Ellis

Sunday's match between Melbourne Heart and Brisbane Roar comes at a time with both sides having regained a little confidence lost in recent weeks.

Heart have had the poorer Christmas period with only one win in their last three games but Tuesday's win over Newcastle Jets was enough to see them off the bottom of the ladder and remain in easy touching distance of a finals berth.

Brisbane, like Heart, have struggled this season and only recorded consecutive wins for the first time this season when they defeated Wellington midweek.

Goals from Besart Berisha and Ben Halloran were encouraging signs for the repeat Champions but the mini resurgence under Mike Mulvey will face a stern test at AAMI Park this weekend. The last time these two sides faced off on the same ground Brisbane were torn apart 4-1, Melbourne giving their best performance of the season.

Since then there's been big changes in Brisbane. Rado Vidosic has been ousted for Mulvey and along with a reshuffling of the playing squad. Yuji Takahashi has been sent back to Japan, Massimo Murdocca has returned to his substitute role of recent seasons and Ben Halloran and Henrique have not only been on the pitch at the same time but have been switching flanks in a manner akin to when Kosta Barbarouses was at the club.

Referee: Alan Milliner

ABC Radio Coverage - Updates into Grandstand cricket coverage



Heart & Roar Keen to Continue Winning Ways

The Odds

Heart 3.20
Draw 3.50
Roar 2.25

Join the conversation on Twitter using the hash-tag #MHvROAR

Despite still turning in performances lacking that cutting edge that has marred their season to date Brisbane have seemingly rediscovered their gritty determination to win and the majority of Roar fans would view these changes as nothing but positives.

Having re-entered the top six for the first time since Round Three thanks to their win over Wellington, Brisbane are still relatively well placed for a finals series push, only six points off third placed Western Sydney Wanderers with thirteen matches remaining.

Melbourne Heart is a further two points back and currently sit second last on the A-League ladder. A

win over Roar would catapult them above the Queenslanders, and possibly even see them as high as fifth should results go their way this weekend.

At this point it seems given that Andrew Redmayne will continue in goal for Heart, the former Brisbane reserve keeper having impressed on debut against Newcastle Jets during the week. "Redders" was highly rated at his former club and there's little doubt that the young keeper will be keen to impress come Sunday.

It's at the back however that Melbourne may have troubles against Brisbane. The Heart have only managed to keep a clean sheet on

the three occasions this season and with Besart Berisha making the trip down to AAMI Park this time the men in red and white will need to keep things tight in defence if they're to get the win.

So far this season home team's have dominated when it comes to securing the three-points and it's hard to go past the Heart when remembering how comprehensively they defeated the Roar last time out. But those memories should also serve to spur on Brisbane and if they can rediscover top form in their efforts to redeem themselves this match could easily go either way.

**Kiss of Death
Heart 2-2 Roar**



Roar Line Up

1. Michael Theo (GK)
2. Matt Smith (capt)
3. Shane Stefanutto
4. Matt Jurman
5. Ivan Franjic
6. Erik Paartalu
7. Besart Berisha
8. Massimo Murdocca
10. Henrique
11. Ben Halloran
17. Mitch Nichols
20. Matt Acton (GK)
21. James Meyer
22. Thomas Broich
24. Nick Fitzgerald.

In: 21.James Meyer (promoted)

Out: 15. James Donachie
(suspended – one week)

Unavailable: Jack Hingert
(hip injury – 4-6 weeks),
Do Dong-Hyun (knee – 2-3
weeks), Luke Brattan (ankle -
1-2 weeks)

Santo, Sam & Ed Podcast

Santo Cilauro, Sam Pang and Ed Kavalee are back in town with their own unique take on events of the week.

Their brief is simple - 7 days, 3 guys, no agenda.

Podcast available on iTunes

<http://itun.es/au/dOdQl.c>

Facebook: Santo, Sam and Ed

Twitter: @SantoSamEd





Wanderers Line Up

1. Ante Covic (GK)
2. Shannon Cole
3. Adam D'Apuzo
4. Nikolai Topor-Stanley
6. Jerome Polenz
7. Labinot Haliti
8. Mateo Poljak
10. Aaron Mooy
11. Tarek Elrich
13. Joey Gibbs
14. Kwabena Appiah-Kubi
5. Reece Caira
18. Iacopo La Rocca
19. Mark Bridge
20. Jerrad Tyson (GK)
21. Shinji Ono
23. Jason Trifiro

*two to be omitted
In: Aaron Mooy (return from suspension)

Out: Michael Beauchamp (suspended - 1 week), Youssef Hersi (suspended - 1 week), Dino Kresinger (knee)

Unavailable: Tahj Minniecon (foot)

W Sydney Wanderers v CC Mariners

By Alex Milic

It's first up against third as the Central Coast Mariners make the trip to Parramatta Stadium to take on the Western Sydney Wanderers in Round 15 of the A-League.

The two sides met in Round 1 and played out a goalless draw at Bluetongue Stadium, this time around both sides have been in excellent form and have a lot of football under their belts. The Mariners are once more proving to be the team to beat in the A-League with nine wins after fourteen rounds of football while the Wanderers have not lost since Round 9 and have won four of their last five matches, scoring twelve goals in the process and conceding only three.

With start player Tom Rogic set to leave the Mariners for the English Premier League it will be interesting to see if he will play against the Mariners or make the trip to England to sign for Reading.

Shinji Ono will however be playing no questions asked, the Japanese star has exploded into the A-League with his recent form proving to be a wise acquisition by the Wanderers. Ono scored a double in last week's 2:1 win against Melbourne Victory and another fine performance could see the Wanderers cut the deficit between the two clubs to four

Referee: Chris Beath

The Odds

WSW 2.70
Draw 3.50
Mariners 2.65

Join the conversation on Twitter using the hash-tag #WSWvCCM

points if the home side wins. Tony Popovic, manager, Western Sydney Wanderers says, "We're coming up against the most consistent team in the league, and they're there on merit. They're the minor premiers from last year, they've got an outstanding manager and there's no-one in our dressing room that is expecting an easy game."

Popovic says, "Anything less than 100 per cent focus and commitment won't be good enough against them. It's still showing that everyone's beating everyone," Popovic said.

"We're obviously in a good po-

Sun Jan 06 Parramatta Stdm 6:00pm



All Eyes On Match Of The Day

ABC Radio Coverage - 92.5 ABC Central coast and Grandstand Digital Sydney & Online



Mariners Line Up

1. Mathew Ryan (Gk)
2. Daniel McBreen
3. Joshua Rose
4. Pedj Bojic
5. Zachary Anderson
7. John Hutchinson (c)
8. Adriano Pellegrino
9. Bernie Ibini
11. Oliver Bozanic
13. Brent Griffiths
14. Michael McGlinchey
15. Brad McDonald
16. Trent Sainsbury
17. Anthony Caceres
18. Nick Montgomery
19. Mitchell Duke
20. Justin Pasfield (Gk)
21. Mile Sterjovski
23. Adam Kwasnik

*four to be omitted

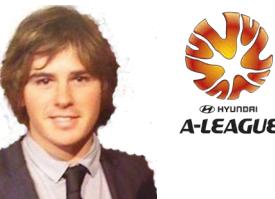
In: 2 Daniel McBreen, 7. John Hutchinson (both return from suspension), 15. Brad McDonald, 17. Anthony Caceres (both promoted)

Out: Nil

Unavailable: 6. Patrick Zwaanswijk (Groin - 1 week), 10. Tomas Rogic (suspended), 22. James Oates (Ankle - 2 months)

Summer football must realise its potential

A-League Rewind



By Robert Di Fabio

There are numerous advantages of staging the A-League season at the opposite end of the other football codes. The most obvious would be the larger chunk of the media pie, additionally holding the campaign throughout the festive and holiday period are also great benefits.

However, the question needs to be asked, is Football Federation Australia taking full advantage of the summer holiday season? Many fans may have seen the governing body advertise through various media channels, through social and traditional outlets, concerning the tagline Summer Football - 15 games in 12 days.

Akin to the English football calendar - with its influx of games over the Christmas and New Year period - the A-League has followed suite, with a raft of fix-

tures surrounding this period. Overall, it was a grand success, with many viewers tuning in and crowd gates at a healthy state. There's no denying that football and summer go hand in hand.

There's certainly a great deal of potential to be realised during the holiday season, however it can easily be argued that FFA isn't taking full advantage of this scenario. Undoubtedly, the A-League is now a mainstay in the Australian sporting sphere, particularly in the summer months, although in terms of summer scheduling, it's visibly a step behind in contrast to its biggest competitor, cricket.

Cricket's Big Bash League competition, a six-week tournament, is played between December and January. Crowds may have declined in its second season; however TV ratings continue to consistently garner figures in excess of 200,000.

While it's unrealistic for the A-League to stage matches as often as Big Bash teams - given the unrelenting demands of football, in contrast to cricket - it's evident that football hasn't taken full advantage throughout the holiday season.

The A-League yearns to be Australia's new summer sport,

yet when we tune into our television sets, more often than not, cricket is taking centre stage. The decline of midweek fixtures this campaign is rather evident, although has it been strategically thought out?

There's no reason why there shouldn't be midweek games featured each Tuesday and Wednesday nights - one match each evening - during the January period. FFA claims that football is the nation's summer sport, yet it's not living up to its promises.

It really is an enormous free kick to its main summer rival. Cricket, through the national team and the BBL, can be seen almost on a daily basis, giving sport lovers and genuine cricket fans a treat during the holiday season.

Can the same be said for football enthusiasts? No, going by the current January scheduling.

During the 2010-11 campaign, crowd averages were merely over 8,000 - the worst since the A-League's inception in 2005. There were many underlying factors which contributed towards this bleak figure, although FFA was clear to point out that the increase in midweek fixtures were its

primary problem.

Since then, it's fair to assume that FFA is hesitant to bring back regular midweek fixtures into the A-League's calendar - fearing a similar trend to the 2010-11 season.

While continual midweek fixtures may not be part and parcel of the Australian sporting culture in any of its football codes, there's certainly room for this concept during the month of January. For football to take another leap forward in popularity, and cultivate the code's appeal with sport fans, the A-League needs to grasp this opportunity and think outside the square.

With kids on school holidays, clubs could market specifically to families by holding promotional initiatives - for instance, one adult ticket gains entry for two children.

The tagline summer football holds vast potential, it's now up to FFA CEO David Gallop to take on fans' feedback, and realise the game's potential during this important period of the season.

Follow Robert on Twitter @ RobertDiFabio



Melbourne Victory, love 'em or hate 'em have grabbed most of the league's positive press this past fortnight and rightly so: having dished up not one but TWO cracking matches of football at AAMI Park in a row! First the pulsating derby against the Heart which saw the blue half of town dish out the first defeat to the relative newcomers since the latter's 2010 debut year, and then the Marco Rojas show against Newcastle Jets! It truly sucks from our point of view he is an already-capped NZ international because even though we do boast the likes of Tom Rogic and what not, Australian football sure could use little 'Hobbit' Marco! Despite the loss to the Wanderers earlier this week ushering in their New Year, the Victory appear to have more than hit their strides by now and will almost certainly firm as a title contender come finals time.



Whilst ordinarily the prospect of the A-League's rising talent gracing the big leagues of Europe is a definite label under 'HOT', I must digress this time given the apparent possibility that Tom Rogic of the Mariners and Marco Rojas could be leaving the A-League at the earliest opportunity - namely THIS current transfer window! Of course I nor anyone begrudges our league's best talent taking off for the big-time of Europe, but for this to happen mid-season without a guarantee of sufficient financial compensation is not an ideal proposition for our league. By all means let them take off at season's end for pastures new, but I needn't say how utterly disruptive it would be for it to happen at this stage of the season when these guys are setting the league alight like nothing else. Whilst we all know the realities of modern professional football, I do hope some degree of rationale prevails as far as this particular issue is concerned. - Alvaro Rodriguez



Rasic Announced As Powerchair Football Ambassador

This January, in an Australian first, teams of athletes with disabilities in electric wheelchairs will compete in the Asia Pacific Oceania (APO) 2013 Powerchair Football zone Championship on 24 to 26 January. The coach who took the Socceroos to their first World Cup finals in 1974, Rale Rasic, will take on the role of Games Ambassador for this inaugural event, hosted and organised by The Australian Powerchair Football Association (APFA), along with the support of disability service provider Northcott.

"When you see these guys play, the passion they show and how they meet the challenges put before them you start to wonder who has the disability - them or us," told Rale, who also coached the Australian Powerchair Football team in the 2011 World Cup in Paris. This January's APO Championship will be held at Sydney Olympic Park Sports Centre, with the Minister for Sport and Recreation, the Hon. Graham Annesley MP, officially opening the competition on Wednesday 24 January at 2pm. Fittingly, the grand finals will be held on Australia Day, Saturday 26 January.

Australia will be competing against Singapore and Japan. Japan are flying in two teams of seven players especially for the occasion.

RAIN. HAIL. SHINE



Scan the QR code to see our new television commercial! Get ready for Melbourne Heart's most exciting season yet. We've got Socceroo legend John Aloisi on board as manager and now we need you! This season our members take centre stage. Become our No.12 and together we will triumph. With 13 massive home games and a great range of membership options - it's time to play your part! Join online at melbourneheartfc.com.au or call 1300 ALL HEART (255 432).

FOR THE LOVE OF THE GAME



BRISBANE ROAR FC

SEASON 2012/13



PHOTO: COURTESY BRISBANE ROAR FC

Back Row Left To Right: Mitch Nichols, George Lambadaridis, Matt Jurman, James Donachie, Matt Acton, Michael Theo, Yuji Takahashi, Erik Paartalu, Besart Berisha, Thomas Broich

Middle Row Left To Right: Anthony Proia, Rocky Visconte, Jason Geria, Steve Farrell (Kit Manager), Tim Oostenbroek (Head Physiotherapist), James Meyer, Ivan Franjic, Nick Fitzgerald, Do Dong-Hyun

Front Row Left To Right: Ben Halloran, Jack Hingert, Corey Brown, Matt Smith (C), Ken Stead (Assistant/Conditioning Coach), Rado Vidosic (Technical Director of Football), Jeff Hopkins (Assistant Coach), Shane Stefanutto, Luke Brattan, Massimo MurDocca, Henrique. NB: Mike Mulvey was appointed Head Coach shortly after team photo was taken.

Planet Football

Qatar



By Alvaro Rodriguez

NAME: Qatar
CAPITAL: Doha
POPULATION: (2010 approx.) 1,853,563
CONFEDERATION: AFC
INTERNATIONAL HONOURS: World Youth Cup runners-up 1981, Asian Games gold-medalists 2006, Arab Nations Cup runners-up 1998, Gulf Nations Cup winners 1992 & 2004
FIFA WORLD RANKING: 104th
ASIAN CUP APPEARANCES: 1980-1992, 2000-2011
WORLD CUP APPEARANCES: 2022 (predetermined as hosts)

WHO ARE YA?

The State of Qatar is situated in the Qatar Peninsula, bordered by Saudi Arabia and the Persian Gulf. The history of the tiny penninsular state dates back to 50,000 BC, and in the ensuing millennia all manner of civilisations and empires, from the Sumerians and Assyrians to the Greeks and Romans left their cultural imprint on the region. In the 600s AD, the region was one of the first worldwide to accept Islam as the dominant faith, renouncing centuries of polytheistic pagan worship and most of the region's Christian/Jewish communities. The Prophet Muhammad, the founder of Islam



Jubilant Qataris celebrate winning the 2022 World Cup hosting bid, December 2010.

made Qatar and the southern portion of Arabia a key military/strategic region, important in the development of the new faith before it took root elsewhere. The Islamization of Qatar thus indelibly shaped its cultural life for all time, as it did in its neighbouring nations.

In the early 16th Century the Portuguese were among the first of the European colonial powers to venture into Qatar, although nearly 2 centuries later it was the ruling family of Bahrain who annexed its nearby neighbour before the Ottoman Empire claimed it in turn in 1871, changing hands again during WWI to the British, who administered it as a protectorate until 1971, when Qatar gained full independence. Since then it has become one of the most economically prosperous and progressive nations in the region, fuelled by its boundless oil wealth, which will be of paramount need in successfully pulling off hosting the 2022 World Cup finals in spite of its small area size (roughly that of Melbourne's metropolitan area) and desert weather.

SO WHAT YOU DONE?

Although Qatar is as football-mad as any nation in the region, its small size both population and area-wise has counted against its progress until recent times. It didn't contest the World Cup until Argentina '78, although it did string together an unbroken chain of Asian Cup appearances until the early '90s, albeit only progressing as far as the quarter-finals in 2000 and 2011 when they hosted. They have however fared better in sub-regional tournaments such as the Gulf and Arab Nations Cups and the WAFF (West Asian Football Federation) Cup, aided also by the naturalization of several key import-players plying their trade in the national QSL (Qatari Stars League).

Whilst generally their WC qualification record has been decidedly lamer, they came to within 1 game of qualifying for France '98 - placed in Group A of Asia's final qualifying round with powerhouse Saudi Arabia, China, Kuwait and Iran, the Qataris needed only beat the Saudis in their final match to pip the Iranians to the automatic qualification spot (as we know all too well, the Iranians



Just in case the GPS isn't working...



Match winner: Sebastian Soria

secured the playoff qualification spot against Japan and once dispatching them, fate pitted them against our Soccerroos in Tehran and then on that fateful Melbourne night in November '97...) - alas, the Saudis triumphed 1-0 thus ending the Qataris' WC dream and eventually consigning the Iranians to their date with destiny at the 'G.

BIG CLUBS

The country's biggest clubs are Al-Gharafa, Al-Sadd, Al-Arabi, Qatar SC and Al-Rayyan, where Victory icon Danny Allsopp played in 2009. Of these, Al-Sadd boast 12 titles; Al-Arabi, Al-Rayyan and Al-Gharafa 7 each and Qatar SC 8.

REP YOUR COLORS

Nicknamed Al-Annabi (The Maroons), the Qatari NT wears all-maroon with white trims, and the away inverted. Al-Gharafa wear yellow and blue, Al-Sadd black and white, Al-Arabi red and white, Al-Rayyan red and black and Qatar SC wear black and yellow stripes in the manner of Hull City, Uruguayan giants Peñarol and Wellington Phoenix.

MATCH WINNERS

Uruguayan-born striker Sebastián Soria is probably the best-known of Qatar's naturalised players. He began his career with Liverpool of Montevideo in his homeland before moving to Al-Gharafa in 2004, leaving for Qatar SC the following year and remaining there until this season when he departed to join Lekhwiya. He was capped 7 times for Qatar at Under-23 (Olympic) level before making his senior NT debut for Qatar upon gaining citizenship, and moreover he finished 3rd overall in the polling for the 2008 AFC Asian Footballer of the Year.

What he has in common with all Qatari players regardless of background is his apparent reluctance to pursue a career in Europe, due to the princely salaries that are stock-standard at home. Consequentially this prevents the country's footballing talent from growing professionally and personally as natural consequence of playing abroad at higher levels than home and all that comes par for the course. This is however a cultural issue not unique to Qatari football but

endemic throughout the Middle East.

In fact the country's only European-based international is midfielder Hussein Yasser, who plies his trade for Archie Thompson's old stomping ground in Belgium, Lierse SK.

SO WHAT NOW?

With the debate on whether Qatar is even fit to host a World Cup showing no signs of abating, the country knows full well that qualifying for Brazil 2014 AND Russia 2018 consecutively will go a long way to dispelling fears and resentment of the global football family. It isn't impossible, but certainly a tall order - all the more from out point of view as Australians having been pipped to the post by them in the 2022 WC hosting and the Qatari SL keeping its 4 Asian Champions League spots whilst we've been whittled down to 1½. That aside however, it makes hefty press for the next 9 or so years - the debate is sure to continue to some degree or other right until the kick-off in Doha in 2022.

Nut-Meg Dept.

www.goalweekly.com

goal! weekly

Boo's World

SUMMER SERIES



By Mark Boric

It's a New Year, but the same old story for a few clubs in the A-League. Alessandro Del Piero would rather watch the fireworks in Sydney Harbour than turn out for Sydney FC. The injury excuse was trotted out, but you would reckon the pencilled in NYE in Sydney when the Australian lifestyle experience was being used as a selling point by the club rather than a trip to Adelaide, where 2013 is not scheduled to arrive for another ten years.

Perth Glory are pretty hard to watch, and Wellington Phoenix are little better which makes their Distance Derby a must miss on the

calendar. And the day isn't far away when someone from Melbourne Heart through one-on-one with the opposing goalkeeper will opt to turn around and pass back to his own custodian.

Newcastle Jets seem to be mirroring owner Nathan Tinkler's fortunes. Which is a bit surprising, as unlike his racehorses the players haven't exactly gone unfed or unwashed, yet. Maybe it's just fear they will be that is doing it.

On the positive side, Tom Rogic and Marco Rojas have turned up the excitement factor. Perhaps a little too high, as those easily wrapped up in hype have them booked on the first flights to Europe when the transfer window opens.

West Sydney Wanderers have certainly found their feet, just as the fans have found their voices. Suddenly the goals are starting to flow. Shinji Ono has paced himself, with the wisdom of a Mr Miyagi, to now be the standout of the big three foreign marquee.

One player yet to hit their stride is Marcos Flores. I'd like to recommend the launch of a "Flares for Flores" initiative, in which fans could prompt him into pulling his finger out by pinging flares at him.



A festive season full of football and fireworks aplenty. Action from Melbourne Victory's 3-2 win over Newcastle Jets. Photos: ANITA MILAS

Perhaps that will provide the spark to ignite his Victory career.

What every EPL club wanted this Christmas would have been a fixture with Aston Villa, who were giving away goals like cheap Christmas presents.

Frequent readers of this column will note I'm not a great fan of Football Federation Victoria, but a report from India blows them away in terms of competence and governance. The All India Football Federation has suspended the

Mohun Bagan club for two years after it refused to come out for the second half of a game against East Bengal after midfielder Syed Rahim Nabi had been struck in the head by a brick thrown from the stands during a riot which followed a sending off.

Sir Alex Ferguson and Ange Postecoglou are both above coaching in the VPL or Victorian State Leagues now, which is just as well for their wallets as the fines they would get from the FFV for their



recent behaviour would have been steeper than any punishment the will get from the FA or FFA.

Speaking of Sir Alex, I'm hoping to get him to write a guest edition of this column shortly. There's no way I could come up with anything funnier than his claim that Robin van Persie could have been killed by Ashley Williams kicking the ball at him.

AGAINST ALL ODDS

A-League Champion 2012/13

Central Coast Mariners	3.50
Adelaide United	4.50
West Sydney Wanderers	8.00
Melbourne Victory	6.00
Brisbane Roar	29.0
Perth Glory	41.0
Wellington Phoenix	126
Newcastle Jets	151
Melbourne Heart	151
Sydney FC	201

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LIVE IT, PLAY IT, LOVE IT!



Couch Potato

* ALL TIMES ARE AEDT

SBS

SBS ONE

Sunday January 6th

10:30 am World Cup 2014 Magazine

11:00 am FIFA Futbol Mundial

SBS TWO

Monday January 7th

4:30pm Futbol Mundial

11:00 pm The World Game

one

Tuesday 08th January 2013

11:00 am Liverpool TV FA Cup 3rd Round

Tuesday 15th January 2013

11:00 am Liverpool TV Manchester United V Liverpool

Friday 18th January 2013

06:00 am Liverpool TV (Rpt) F.A Cup 3rd Round

SETANTA SPORTS

FRIDAY 4TH JANUARY

SPL Round 22 Hearts v Hibernian

6:40am **LIVE**

SATURDAY 5TH JANUARY

Blue Square Premier Round 25 Newport v Wrexham 6:30am **LIVE**

SPL Round 22 Highlight Show 12:40pm 1st Airing

WEDNESDAY 9TH JANUARY

Capital One Cup Semi-Final 1st Leg Bradford v Aston Villa 6:40am **LIVE**

THURSDAY 10TH JANUARY

Capital One Cup Semi-Final 1st Leg Chelsea v Swansea 6:40am **LIVE**

SATURDAY 12TH JANUARY

nPower Championship Round 26 Wolves v Blackburn 6:40am **LIVE**

Capital One Cup Semi-Final 1st Leg Highlights Show 1:00pm 1st Airing

SUNDAY 13TH JANUARY

nPower Championship Round 26 Middlesbrough v Watford 1:55am **LIVE**

nPower Championship Round 26 Hull v Sheffield Wednesday 4:15am **LIVE**

TUESDAY 15TH JANUARY

nPower Championship Round 26 Highlight Show 7:00pm 1st Airing

FRIDAY 18TH JANUARY

Bundesliga Round 18 Preview Show 7:00pm 1st Airing

SATURDAY 19TH JANUARY

Bundesliga Round 18 Schalke v Hannover 6:25am **LIVE**

nPower Championship Round 27 Leicester v Middlesbrough 8:50am 1st Airing

Eredivisie Round 19 PSV v PEC 12:30pm 1st Airing

Blue Square Premier Round 28 Braintree v Grimsby 2:50pm 1st Airing

SPL Round 23 St Mirren v Ross Co 11:40pm **LIVE**

FOX SPORTS

ENGLISH PREMIER LEAGUE **LIVE**

Times listed are 7 minutes prior to kick-offs.

English Premier League

No games on January 5-7, January 26-28 due to FA Cup.

QPR v Tottenham on January 15 may move to January 12 if either team involved in FA Cup Round 3 replay.

WEEK 22

Sun Jan 13 Stoke v Chelsea 1.53 am Fox 1

Sun Jan 13 Fulham v Wigan 1.53 am Viewers Choice

Sun Jan 13 Norwich v Newcastle 1.53 am Viewers Choice

Sun Jan 13 Reading v West Brom 1.53 am Viewers Choice

Sun Jan 13 Sunderland v West Ham 1.53 am Viewers Choice

Sun Jan 13 Aston Villa v Southampton 1.53 am Fox 2

Sun Jan 13 Everton v Swansea 7.00 am Fox 1 (DELAY)

Mon Jan 14 Manchester United v Liverpool 12.15 am Fox 1

Mon Jan 14 Arsenal v Manchester City 2.45 am Fox 1

Tue Jan 15 QPR v Tottenham 6.53 am Fox 1

Hyundai A-League

All games **LIVE**

Sat Jan 5 Newcastle Jets v Adelaide Utd 5.30 pm Fox 1

Sat Jan 5 Melbourne Victory v Wellington Phoenix 7.45 pm Fox 1

Sat Jan 5 Perth Glory v Sydney FC 9.45 pm Fox 1

Sun Jan 6 Melbourne Heart v Brisbane Roar 4.00 pm Fox 1

Sun Jan 6 Western Sydney v Central Coast 6.00 pm Fox 1

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Round 12: ASK THE EXPERTS

THE VERDICT

Jets (3) Adelaide (3) Draw (2) - Victory (4) Phoenix (0) Draw (4) - Glory (1) Sydney (5) Draw (2) - Heart (3) Roar (2) Draw (3) - Wanderers (0) Mariners (8) Draw (0)

SANTO CILAURO

32

Jets

Victory

Glory

Draw

Draw

Last week: 4

CRAIG MACKENZIE

32

Adelaide

Victory

Glory

Heart

Draw

Last week: 2

EDDIE KRNEVIC

29

Jets

Victory

Glory

Heart

Draw

Last week: 3

PETER KATHOLOS

23

Draw

Victory

Draw

Heart

Wanderers

Last week: 0

ROGER SLEEMAN

36

Adelaide

Victory

Glory

Heart

Draw

Last week: 3

ANDY HARPER

28

Wanderers

Brisbane

Wellington

Draw

Victory

Last week: 2

JOHN DOYLE

29

Adelaide

Victory

Glory

Roar

Mariners

Last week: 1

KISS OF DEATH

31

Draw

Victory

Glory

Draw

Wanderers

Last week: 3

Ball boy at Arsenal – A Dream Come True!

By Matt Mays

I will always remember where I was when it all started. It was lunchtime at my school, and I was sitting at a computer with my close mate Dan surfing the net. As usual I was looking at the Arsenal page (things haven't changed) where I came across an advert: Ball boy/ball girls wanted for the 2001/02 season. So I applied and my Dad drove me to an indoor arena at Highbury on a cloudy day in May 2001. The trials itself was a strange experience. There must have been over 300 kids there, all wanting the same thing. Less than a week later, I came home from school to find a letter on my fireplace. I sat down, opened the letter fully expecting for the first words to read "We are sorry but..." but to my surprise it started with "Congratulations..." I leapt out of my seat and swore at the top of my lungs (sorry Mum). The butterflies kicked in. This just got real! Before the season started we had to go and attend a meet-and-greet with the other ball boy/girls squad on a steaming hot day in July. Me and my Mum took the train and when we arrived I was pleased to see one of the boys I got friendly with also got in! We waited outside Highbury by a side entrance. The door swung open and the lady told us to walk through towards the pitch. Until this point I had never been inside Highbury so my legs felt like jelly. The stadium was like a dream. The grass was green and as smooth as carpet. I will always remember the smell of the wet grass. At that moment it really hit me that I was working for Arsenal Football Club – my dream had come true! Every ball boy/girl was designated a spot in the stadium.

Thierry Henry and Freddie Ljungberg made Matt's day against Ipswich Town.

For the first few games, I was situated down by the corner flag in the East Stand. During the first game vs. Leeds Utd (my first ever Arsenal game – and we lost 2-1) my first ever job was to throw the ball to Ian Harte. He scored that day too. The first few games I was just in ore, and kept telling myself that I wasn't dreaming. And just as I thought things couldn't get any better, they did. Champions League night game along and I think we were playing Schalke. Before the game we were told we had to be in the middle of the pitch waving the massive Champions League flag after the players walked out. My smile went from ear to ear, but I was so nervous. So a few minutes later I found myself in the middle of the Highbury pitch, surrounded by 35,000 fans, waving the flag. The hairs still stick up on the back of my neck when I hear that Champions League tune – because of that moment. Pretty much every match day consisted of me getting the

train with my dad. I remember being in tears once because my Dad was late home from work one-day and I arrived at the stadium 3 minutes after kick-off (we were supposed to get there 90 minutes before). I thought I was going to be fired, but it was okay. So after a few games they moved me to the North Bank. So many great many great memories sitting there (on my little stool); placing the ball on the corner spot; watching Fabien Barthez have the worst game of his career; I even saw Liverpool's Jamie Carragher pick up a coin from the floor and throw it back into the crowd. But the best was an unforgettable one. Later on in the season, I had to have an operation which forced me to stay home and miss a couple of games, one of which was the North London Derby (I was gutted). My first game back was against Ipswich town, a match we had to win as we were pretty close to clinching the League title. It was a frustrating game,

chances went begging. But less than 10 minutes to go, my hero for the year Freddie Ljungberg tapped home and the crowd went mental! Him and Thierry Henry celebrated and started running towards my spot. They got closer and closer and I didn't know what to do. Suddenly I found myself jumping up and down with my arm around Freddie and Thierry going nuts! Now we were told not to celebrate but I thought to myself when on earth am I going to get another opportunity to do this? I had no regrets, and my celebration was caught on camera. I'm actually on the end-of-season DVD too so I have that moment for the rest of my life. We won the league and cup double that year. I was there to watch Tony 'Mr.Arsenal' Adams lift the title. I couldn't go to the FA Cup final, but I knew nothing could beat the year I just had. Arsenal gave me the best year of my childhood. Gooner for life.

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18

Goal! Weekly - Friday 4th January 2013

Papas wants to slow down. Yeah, right



ARTHUR Papas is considering turning his back on a lucrative three-year contract extension from the All India Football Federation.

The 32-year-old continues to drive a coaching juggernaut moving at breakneck speed through football ranks but claims to now be seriously contemplating slowing down to mere mortal pace.

Hey, Arthur. We've heard it all before mate and nothing eventuated.

Why? Maybe it's a case of once a workaholic always a workaholic.

In a handful of years Papas has gone from being an assistant coach in the VPL to AIS scholarship coach, Oakleigh Cannons head coach and 2011 VPL Coach of the Year, assistant youth coach at Melbourne Heart, Newcastle Jets assistant coach and now coach of India's national under-23 side and development club Pailan Arrows.

Along the way he has won the admiration of Nino Ragusa, Vlado Torteviski, Chris Taylor, Rob Baan, Jan Versleijen, Han Berger, John Boulton and Gary van Egmond among others and made an indelible impression on everyone he has had close contact with.

Former FFA technical director Rob Baan is technical director with the Indian federation and was instrumental in prising Papas from the Jets' clutches earlier last year and enticing him to sign a one-year contract last May.

The lure of working at the coalface of world football's final frontier was all powerful as was the chance of creating history.

"I ended up being the youngest guy ever to coach at AFC championship level. That was a huge attraction at the time," said Papas.

"But to be honest I'm quite comfortable with a one-year contract. They have already initiated contract talks. I've been offered a three-year extension with a really good pay increase but I've never been in football for the money.

"I'll be happy to enter talks and to see what potential there is but the more and more I think about it the more and more I find it hard to go beyond a year."

Papas was talking to GW during a whirlwind five-day visit to see family and friends in Melbourne and as much as home is where his heart lies there is no doubt that this is one contract he will see out.

"Yes, I want to finish this one definitely because I didn't finish my Newcastle one or my Melbourne Heart one and although I had my reasons I don't want to get a reputation at my age as someone who doesn't see out their contract."

He's found Kolkata, where he is based, extremely challenging.

"I didn't really understand why people looked at me kind of funny when I told them I was based in Kolkata but I get it now.

"The lifestyle is very different to what I'm used to. I'm either in training or at my apartment and you're limited on what you can do on a personal level.

"When I'm home in Melbourne I'm out walking a lot and I have a personal life.

"The other thing that makes it hard is being apart from my girlfriend. It's really not feasible for her to come here and it would be virtually impossible for her to work in Kolkata anyway."

So after achieving in a handful of years what many coaches in Australia fail to achieve in a lifetime, is this a genuine hint of reflection on the personal costs involved in his pursuit of coaching excellence?

"I've been doing this (coaching) for a long time now. Maybe not long in other people's eyes because of my age but I've been sacrificing everything for football and maybe it's time I started looking at the other side of life."

Then in the next breath he talks about interest from abroad and the possibility of working in Thailand or the Middle East.

"I've had some interest from the Thai Premier League and from Dubai as well but it all comes down to if I want to keep pushing myself the way I have been."

He's even chatted with former Adelaide United assistant Phil Stubbins, now in charge of Thai giant Bangkok Glass, and although Papas claims their conversation was about a player in India that Stubbins was monitoring it's difficult to believe that the ins and outs of Thai club football were not discussed at length.

"Although working in India has been a really challenging experience from a personal perspective, from a professional perspective it's gone very well, better than maybe I even expected," said Papas.

That's a reference to almost achieving AFC qualifying success with the national under-22s and his work in India's elite I-League with Pailan Arrows, a development squad of potential Indian national team players.

Papas had a mountain to climb from day one in India. His immediate task was to oversee credible performances in the AFC Under-22 qualifying tournament in Oman. India was in West Asia Group A and was the lowest ranked team in their group.

And the qualifying tournament kicked off in late June ending in early July so time wasn't on his side.



Arthur Papas – where to next for the coaching whiz-kid?

Nevertheless Papas and India defied the odds, defeating Lebanon 5-2, Turkmenistan 4-1, drawing with UAE 1-1 and only losing 2-1 to eventual group winner Iraq.

It all came down to India's last game against the host nation but after having a foot in the qualifying door at half-time thanks to a 0-0 scoreline the Indians fell apart in the second half going down 4-0 to Oman.

"The Indian federation was very happy with how the results went and they were happy with the football we played too.

"People don't understand how big the I-League is and will become. I mean Carlos Hernandez is playing there and there are Nigerian players on 20,000 to 30,000 (Australian dollars) a month."

"I have a certain way that I like my teams to play. It's not a national curriculum it's just my way."

And it's clear that the Papas way works. Not long after gaining credibility for the national under-22 side he took on the job of resurrecting Pailan Arrows who had a spectacularly unflattering previous season winning just two games.

More importantly, the development squad had come in for a lot of

criticism from opposition teams. It was a situation with many parallels to the AIS and NTC involvement in the VPL.

"I could relate to the way the clubs felt but I very much supported giving these young players the opportunity to compete at a professional level," said Papas.

"When I was with Oakleigh I was all in favour of the NTC being in the league. They didn't win a lot of games but they beat us and probably cost us finishing on top of the ladder but that didn't change the way I felt about them being involved.

"With Pailan I was mindful of having other clubs thinking we're just a youth program without being mindful of results as well.

"Rob (Baan) said to me it comes down to one of two things. Either you get really good results or people talk about the way your team plays football. And if you can get both then it's a bonus.

"He never said you have to play 4-3-3 or 4-4-2 or anything like that and since then I've went about my work pretty much the same as if I was working with a senior team to be honest."

And Papas has been winning on both fronts – results and respect.

"Again it's really challenging. I know I keep saying this. But you're in a pro league with guys who are all under 21 and no foreigners.

"People don't understand how big the I-League is and will become. I mean Carlos Hernandez is playing there and there are Nigerian players on 20,000 to 30,000 (Australian dollars) a month.

"We don't have a lot of problems playing against the local players

but we have problems coping with the foreign players.

"Yet we've done very well. We've doubled last year's win total just 11 games into the season and we're receiving really good feedback from the other clubs.

"Other coaches have been coming out saying 'it's really hard playing against these guys' and 'that was a really tough game' so the whole perspective has changed very quickly."

What didn't change was the continuing growth of brand Papas and the Australian is now seen as one of the finest coaches in the I-League.

"I had a really interesting October. One of the big clubs in the league sacked their coach after three weeks into the season and I got offered the position.

"This is one of the clubs that figures in the biggest derby in the league where over 100,000 go to the game in fact it's one of the biggest derbies in world football and I didn't even know about it.

"But I decided to stay with Pailan because I had worked very hard with these young players and I didn't want to walk away.

"Domestically I think there's a really good perception of what I'm doing as a coach, so much so that whenever a coach gets sacked – and believe me they get sacked a lot over there – I get linked with the job straight away.

"I've gained a lot from working in India. I feel so much more capable of dealing with things than I did before I went there.

"Especially on the management side. And dealing with a different culture. I feel if you can cope over

there you can cope anywhere."

And we couldn't have a Papas story without an update on his academic achievements. True to form he's been able to find time for academia while fulfilling his football commitments at national team and club level in the subcontinent.

"I finally finished my Master's over there, which was one of my goals.

"I said when I finished my sports science degree that I'd never study again then the Master's came along.

"I feel like that's the end of it now but having said that I have tracked down a PhD course on sports coaching with EPL club Sunderland and I have contacted them so you never know.

"I don't know whether I'll do it or not. I don't even know where I'll be in football in five years' time.

"I'd love to come back here. I'd love to come back to Melbourne or to Australia in general but you never know.

"I don't completely trust the game if that makes sense.

"It can spit you out as quickly as it sucks you in. You can be flying high then suddenly you hit these speed bumps.

"I've always said that I need my education behind me to give me options outside football.

"It's like this. If you're unsuccessful in your next job in football you could almost make it very hard for yourself to keep going."

So says Papas the pragmatist.

The man who leaves you with a strong belief that when he finally hits that speed bump the change of pace won't be too difficult for him to deal with.

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John Filan: Unsung hero between the sticks

Blast From The Past



By Roy Hay

Over many years Australia has produced a string of first class goalkeepers, who have distinguished themselves by their skills and their longevity in the game.

The current Socceroo incumbent, Mark Schwarzer, shows no sign of retiring after 23 years in his senior career. John Filan nearly matched that length of performance in Australia and England but his contribution to the game is much less well known.

John Filan was born in Sydney in February 1970. Like many other youngsters he alternated between goalkeeping and out-field play but eventually settled as a keeper with St George. He made his debut at the start of the 1989-90 summer season in the National Soccer League at 19 replacing Mike Gibson and played in every game. He was selected for the Young Soccerroos in their qualifying matches for the World Youth Cup in 1989, but Australia did not reach the final tournament in Saudi Arabia. When St George was relegated at the end of the 1990-1991 summer season, despite finishing above

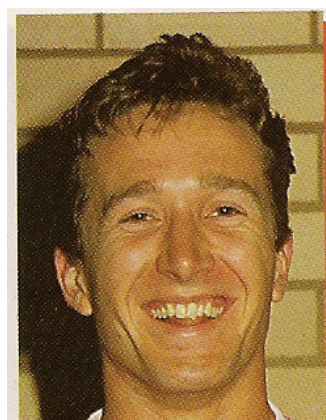
four other clubs, Filan moved to Wollongong City where he played 29 League games before heading to England to join Cambridge United after a trial at Southampton.

In 1991-92 Filan was the number one keeper for the Olyroos as they qualified for the Olympic Games in Barcelona, with Mark Bosnich as his back-up. Filan also gained two caps with the Soccerroos, against USA B team in the President's Cup in South Korea in 1991 and Uruguay in 1992 during a tour of South America. The Olympic Games qualifiers came down to a two-leg encounter with the Netherlands. Most people remember Ned Zelic's crucial goal in extra-time in Utrecht which earned a two-all draw with Holland and ensured qualification on away goals, but forget the brilliant performance of Filan between the sticks in that match. He pulled off a string of saves from a world class Dutch team including the de Boer brothers, Arthur Numan, Marc Overmars and Phillip Cocu.

When it came to the final Olympic tournament Filan was replaced by Bosnich after the opening defeat against Ghana. He returned for the bronze medal play-off against the same team, but that match was also lost by a single goal. Subsequently Filan was interviewed for an infamous article in Inside Sport in which he inadvertently blew the whistle on the horse-trading by agents which occurred during the games. Filan is quoted by Matthew Hall in The Away Game as believing that the article, rather



John Filan instructs his defence while at Wigan Athletic. Source: Getty Images.



JOHN FILAN

Goalkeeper; Born 8/2/70; came to Wollongong City from St. George in 1991; Represented Australia at U/19, U/23 and Socceroo levels.

John Filan at Wollongong City in 1992. Source: Program for top five series in the NSL in 1992.

than his on-field performances, explains which he only received one more cap for Australia—in 1997 against Hungary. Given the highly political nature of the governance of the game in the 1990s and the investigations leading to the Stewart Report and its aftermath, that may be a plausible explanation. However Filan faced strong competition for the Socceroo jersey from Robert Zabica, Schwarzer, Bosnich, Zelko Kalac, Frank Juric and Jason Petkovic. As Filan was playing in England with teams outside the top flight in the 1990s it was perhaps harder for him to prove his talent than for at least some of the others. Much later Filan tried unsuccessfully to get FIFA to allow

him to play for the Republic of Ireland under Jack Charlton, but his Olympic stint was the stumbling block.

Filan served a long spell with Cambridge United from 1992 to 1995 then went via Nottingham Forest to Coventry City and then to Blackburn Rovers in 1997. His first season was mainly as understudy to Tim Flowers, but the following season he played 26 games to Flowers 10.

In 2001 he had to make a crucial decision when new manager Graeme Souness brought in USA international Brad Freidel as his preferred keeper. Filan could have stayed and picked up a substantial wage, but instead he took a gamble on the prospects of Wigan Athletic,

then in Division Two under the ambitious management of Paul Jewell. The fee for his transfer was around £600,000 (\$1.2m). When some of his Sydney mates heard he had joined Wigan, they thought he had changed codes and signed for the rugby league club!

Jewell and Filan took Athletic to the Division Two title in 2002-03 with Filan ever present in the league. In 2004-05 he again played in every game as Wigan finished second in the Football League Championship and with that promotion to the English Premier League. Many people tipped Wigan to go straight back down, but in fact they finished 10th in the EPL with Filan sharing the keeping duties with

Mike Pollitt. In February Filan came on as substitute in the English League Cup final when Pollitt was injured. Manchester United won the game by four-nil. Josip Skoko joined Wigan that year so Australia had two players in the Wigan squad in the EPL. In 2006 Wigan signed another England keeper Chris Kirkland, but Filan still managed 10 games towards the end of the season. Filan then returned to Australia where he was in the frame to sign a short-term contract with Sydney FC in August 2007, which he eventually declined though he later worked a goalkeeping coach for the club and appeared at least once on an A-League team sheet as a substitute keeper.



Blackburn Rovers squad in 1998. John Filan is 5th from the right in the top row. Source: Rothman's Football Yearbook, 1999-2000.

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Vale Extends Lead At The Top

With Christmas day around the corner Santa came early delivering a staggering 122 goals across the two rounds played. It's the Half way mark of the 2012-13 NIKE V-League premiership season finds Pascoe Vale Futsal Club on top with 31 premiership points, 6 points clear of Hume Futsal Club who are 1 point ahead of Metropolitan Futsal Club & a 4 point gap separating them from Vic Vipers Futsal Club who are sitting in 4th.

Round 10 Fitzroy's fine run of victories continues

Fitzroy FC have come into some form in recent weeks and this time it was bottom of the table Brighton FC who wanted to have their first win of the season. Fitzroy dominated the match with the experience of Adam Hussein and Kesra Majbouri both recording double strikes as Fitzroy took the points 6-3.

Fitzroy FC 6 (A. Hussein 2, K. Majbouri 2, C. Smith, V. Zoric) def. **Brighton FC 3** (C. Saffo 2, H. Shamon)

Pascoe Vale defeat rival Metropolitan

With Vic Vipers off the boil this season it looked like Metropolitan FC was the only team that could stop Pascoe Vale wrapping up the title. This game had a bit of everything quality goals, high tempo futsal and last ditch defending, in a entertaining game for the fans. Pascoe Vale were to good at the right moments and that man Ernie Simsek chimed in with another hat-trick in a big game as Pascoe Vale win 8-2.

Pascoe Vale FC 8 (E. Simsek 3, T. Umeda 2, A. Caro 2, S. Soufi) def. **Metropolitan FC 6** (J. Julardzija 2, A. Stevanovic, D. Redzepovic, A. Redzepovic)

Vic Vipers stop Hume in their tracks

Hume FC was sitting 2nd in the ladder coming into the match against Vipers and they needed a win to keep the pressure on Pascoe Vale FC. Vipers on the other hand were hoping to kick start their poor season and that's exactly what they did taking the points 6-4.

Vic Vipers FC 6 (A. Cooper 2, M. Santoro, Jas. Barrientos, Jon. Barrientos) def. **Hume FC 4** (M. Tankir, R. Culculoglu, M. Parlak, V. Mazurskiy)

Brunswick records win over Prahran

CF Brunswick turn up to play and it was Prahran that was left with no answers. Brunswick coach Antonis Apostolakis men produced one of their best performances and he will be hoping this continues into the new year as they took the win 4-1.

CF Brunswick 4 (N. Yaw 2, R. Roslan, H. Diagme (OG)) def. **FC Prahran 1** (J. Knight)



Ashburton goalkeeper Lorenzo De Paris saves at the back post during round 11 action. Photo: DAMIAN BRIGGS



Fitzroy FC's Phil Robotis controls the ball on his chest as Brighton's Christian Saffo watches. Photo: DAMIAN BRIGGS

Balwyn prove too good for Essendon

A four goal effort by Sam La Manda was enough to help FC Balwyn ensure victory of FC Essendon. Essendon did so some positive signs throughout the match but were outclassed by the more experienced Balwyn outfit.

FC Balwyn 7 (S. La Manda 4, A. D'Ortenzio, E. Evans, J. Ihaz (OG)) def. **FC Essendon 3** (B. Vanega 2, M. Hernandez)

Ashburton turn on the Style as they account for Moreland

Ashburton finally produced the quality futsal all the fan of the V-League has been waiting to see. Gui Costa's men were tactically too good for Moreland who relied to heavily on their main man Tuhuran Sumbul. Look for Ashburton to have a great run home if they can produce the futsal they played throughout this game.

Ashburton FC 8 (A. Arreggin 3, M.

Matar 2, M. Rocca 2, B. Gearboc) def. **Moreland FC 2** (T. Sumbul, S. Murat)

Round 11 Fitzroy win by the odd goal

Fitzroy ensured they ended the year on a high with a win over Balwyn. The match was ended to end with both teams going goal for goal in an entertaining battle. Fitzroy have worked out how to hold a lead in recent rounds and they did not let the result slip as they won it 5-4.

Fitzroy FC 5 (K. Majbouri 2, A. Hussein, A. Mesinovic, E. Huynh) def.

FC Balwyn 4 (T. Saric 2, B. Bodo, M. Saric)

Pascoe Vale wins in match of the season

WOW is the best way to describe this match, This was the best game this season by a long way. Both teams produced some outstanding Futsal as this tactical battle ensured the fans would go home happy. Pascoe Vale took a 3-0 lead but Ashburton's Matteo Rocca hat-trick dragged his team back into the contest. With Ashburton playing 5th man with new goalkeeper Lorenzo De Paris the outcome was not known to the last seconds as Ashburton had chances to draw level.

Pascoe Vale FC 5 (S. Soufi 3, E. Simsek, T. Umeda) def. **Ashburton FC 4** (M. Rocca 3, R. Armellini)

Prahran defeat Essendon

With the rumors floating around the V-League of captain Maxi Avram's possible move to Vic Vipers in during the transfer window, there was plenty of interest in this match. Despite the attention Avram produced a sublime hat-trick as he guided Prahran to victory.

FC Prahran 6 (M. Avram 3, C. Holmes, J. Knight, H. Kanjo) def. **FC Essendon 4** (P. Atsikidis 2, J. Ihasz 2)

Alija Redzepovic scores 5 as Metro beat Brighton

A 5 goal haul from Aalija Redzepovic was enough to guide Metro to victory over Brighton FC. From the opening whistle Metropolitan were to good for Brighton as they ran out victors 7-4.

Metropolitan FC 7 (A. Redzepovic 5, D. Redzepovic, J. Avdic) def.

Brighton FC 4 (H. Shamon 2, C. Saffo 2, T. Bayrakli)

Hume accounts for Brunswick

Hume FC produced another 9-goal performance as they tore the Brunswick defence apart. Vadim Mazurskiy score a hat trick and 2 assists as he guided his team to victory.

Hume FC 9 (V. Mazurskiy 3, N. Sahin 2, F. Bozdogan, R. Culculoglu, S. Cicek, C. Yang) def. **CF Brunswick 4** (R. Roslan, D. Marusic, N. Yaw, M. Gondwe)

Vipers start slow but bag 9...

Vipers star Kui Mu is starting to recapture the form that saw him razzle in the V-League in previous seasons, his hat-trick helped guide his Vipers teammates to a 9-3 victory over Moreland.

Vic Vipers FC 9 (K. Mu 3, A. Cooper, H. Tran, L. Holian, M. Santoro, Jas. Barrientos, S. Alinejad) def. **Moreland FC 3** (B. Sahin, S. Murat, B. Koca)

V-League Standings

	P	W	D	L	GF	GA	GD	Pts
1 Pascoe Vale FC	10	9	1	0	82	40	+42	28
2 Hume FC	10	7	1	2	74	28	+46	22
3 Metropolitan FC	10	7	0	3	80	49	+31	21
4 Vic Vipers FC	10	6	2	2	49	38	+11	20
5 Moreland FC	10	6	0	4	49	72	-23	18
6 Ashburton FC	10	5	1	4	38	30	+8	16
7 Fitzroy FC	10	4	1	5	42	39	+3	13
8 CF Brunswick	10	4	0	6	41	51	-10	12
9 FC Balwyn	10	3	1	6	48	66	-18	10
10 FC Essendon	10	3	0	7	32	69	-37	9
11 FC Prahran	10	2	1	7	40	61	-21	7
12 Brighton FC	10	0	0	10	22	54	-32	0

Round 12 Clashes Friday January 18

6:30pm - Pascoe Vale FC vs. Brighton FC
7:20pm - Moreland FC vs. CF Brunswick
8:10pm - Vic Vipers FC vs. Ashburton FC
9:00pm - Fitzroy FC vs. FC Prahran
9:50pm - Metropolitan FC vs. FC Balwyn
10:40pm - Hume FC vs. FC Essendon

Round 13 Clashes Sunday January 20

2:00pm - FC Balwyn vs. Pascoe Vale FC
3:00pm - Fitzroy FC vs. Hume FC
4:00pm - Ashburton FC vs. Brighton FC
5:00pm - FC Essendon vs. Moreland FC
6:00pm - CF Brunswick vs. Vic Vipers FC
7:00pm - FC Prahran vs. Metropolitan FC

Top Goal Scorers

Juso Julardzija (Metropolitan FC) - 24 Goals
Alija Redzepovic (Metropolitan FC) - 22 Goals
Ernie Simsek (Pascoe Vale FC) - 17 Goals
Vadim Mazurskiy (Hume FC) - 17 Goals
Burukan Koca (Moreland FC) - 16 Goals

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<p>“In the papers this morning: ‘Police closing in on Ian Holloway.’ Sorry, it’s ‘Palace closing in on Ian Holloway.’” - Alan Brazil, radio presenter</p> <p>“That’s exactly how you head a ball, with the head.” - Ray Wilkins</p> <p>“It was nice to hear Ray Wilkins speaking so articulate.” - Micky Quinn</p> <p>“I’ve just watched the replay and there is absolutely no doubt: it’s inconclusive.” - Garth Crooks</p> <p>“Have Liverpool done too much tinkering and tailoring with the system?” - Stan Collymore</p> <p>“With all their guns flying, Tottenham would be a real threat.” - Glenn Hoddle</p> <p>“Some of the Scotland players need to look themselves in the face.” - Alan Brazil</p> <p>“I don’t want Rooney to leave these shores but if he does, I think he’ll go abroad.” - Ian Wright</p> <p>“It’s looking more and more less likely.” - Robbie Fowler</p> <p>“Most of Michael Owen’s goals have come in the past.” - Dan Walker</p> <p>“Hopefully Andy (Carroll) has only tweeted his hamstring” - Sam Allardyce</p> <p>“Balotelli is like Marmite – you either love him or hate him. Me? I’m in between.” - Joe Royle</p> <p>“McClellan’s been like a fresh of bread air.” - Roy Keane</p> <p>“If Oscar carries on like this then the world, literally, is at his oyster.” - Ian Abrahams</p> <p>“On a different day, the referee might’ve been throwing yellow cards around like a man with no arms.” - George Andrews interviews Stoke’s Andy Wilkinson on Signal Radio after a fraught game v Everton.</p> <p>“They gave us four minutes [of stoppage time]. That’s an insult to the game. It denies you a proper chance to win a football match.” - Sir Alex Ferguson after United lost 3-2 at home to Tottenham</p>	<p>“You would have to be a confirmed masochist to enjoy it.” - Ferguson on the Manchester derby</p> <p>“Sir Alex was very convivial. So I chanced a joke to him that it was the longest he’d spent talking to the press in years. He laughed but five minutes later in the corridor, he growled: ‘I’ll remember you.’” - Barry Flatman, tennis writer, meeting Ferguson at Andy Murray’s US Open press briefing</p> <p>“The little boy inside me was screaming ‘Manchester United’. United breathes football... the perfect match for me.” - Robin van Persie</p> <p>“If Ryan Giggs’s wife divorced him and took half of everything, how would you feel about her having six more Premier League medals than you?” - Tweet to Steven Gerrard on a Q&A to mark his 600th Liverpool game</p> <p>“I want to get a box at Man United and a Range Rover Sport, and Catherine wants a new carpet for the upstairs landing.” - Gareth Bull, £41m lottery winner</p> <p>“The worst return by an English side in Champions League history” - Fifa.com on Man City’s three points and bottom place in Group D</p> <p>Reporter: “Do you know how many managers City have had in your 25 years with United?” Ferguson: “Fourteen, but I wish it was 15.” - Exchange as United vied for the league title with Roberto Mancini’s City.</p> <p>“The fact that an Englishman has an Argentinian as an idol is very rare. I keep watching my [title-winning] goal against QPR and every time I get more emotional. My plan is to stay here because I’m convinced Manchester City will be at the same level as Real Madrid and Barcelona.” - Sergio Aguero</p> <p>“It’s very difficult to compliment City. But we’re not stupid. They won it.” - Sir Bobby Charlton, United director</p> <p>“It’s inevitable that Pep Guardiola or Jose Mourinho will be at City one day.” - Gary Neville turns up the heat on Mancini before this month’s derby</p> <p>“That trophy’s certainly what we’ve</p>	<p>been waiting for, what the owner’s been waiting for, what he was in tears for. He’s strived for this, pumped an awful lot of money in trying to achieve that. We’ve done it and Robbie (Di Matteo) deserves a lot of credit.” - John Terry after Chelsea’s Champions League success</p> <p>“The game was crazy. Bayern Munich scored on about 80 minutes, and with the last corner, our only one, Didier [Drogba] scored. After my penalty was saved I still believed in Petr Cech. He was like an angel and saved the important ones. It was an explosion of feelings when Didier scored that [winning] penalty. It was destiny.” - Juan Mata</p> <p>“It was undeserved. More than that, actually, it was a farce. [Chelsea] may call themselves the best team in Europe, but this will go down in football history as an accident.” - Germany’s Die Zeit newspaper</p> <p>“At Chelsea, a sacking is just another day at the office.” - Andre Villas-Boas on his successor Di Matteo’s demise</p> <p>“F**k off Benitez, you’re not wanted here.” - Song by Chelsea fans welcoming their latest manager 6. Arrivederci Fabio</p> <p>“I didn’t run away, I left because there was a misunderstanding. I felt great but sometimes you decide to leave.” - Fabio Capello</p> <p>Reporter: “Was the Capello era an expensive mistake?” David Bernstein (FA chairman): “It was certainly expensive, no one can argue anything other than that, but it wasn’t a mistake”</p> <p>“We want an Englishman full of passion and commitment for our country. I’m telling you, we’ve had enough of these foreigners... all they want is money. There’s only one bloke. Forget about anybody else, Harry Redknapp’s our man.” - Barry Fry</p> <p>“The Queen is above it all” - Capello to Italian TV, who asked Her Majesty’s view of his resignation</p> <p>“BWING ON THE EUWOES! We’ll see you in Ukraine against Fwance” - The Sun headline mocking Roy Hodgson’s speech after the FA picked him rather than Redknapp</p> <p>“There’s a great quote from Henry</p>	<p>Kissinger, which I became aware of from reading [Joseph] Heller’s Good As Gold. He said: ‘Every great achievement was a dream before it became a reality.’” - Roy Hodgson after becoming England manager</p> <p>“You have to accept that failure isn’t impossible. In football we’re branded either as “winners” or “losers”, but I think you are a failure only when you start to blame someone else for your failings.” - Hodgson to the Oxford Union</p> <p>“I’ve been in the England set-up with Tom since the Under-21s, and he loves ketchup. He even has it on Sunday dinners. When we were told we’re not allowed ketchup in the senior set-up. I could see the devastation on his face.” - Kyle Walker on Tom Cleverley after their call-up by Hodgson</p> <p>“Improbable, implausible and contrived.” - Verdict on Terry’s defence at the FA’s hearing</p> <p>“Football sometimes appears to cocoon itself from the real world.” - Tom Flanagan of law firm Irwin Mitchell</p> <p>“It’s too little, too late. He’s a low-life. A clever low-life... but a low-life” - Trevor Hicks, Hillsborough Family Support Group, on ex-Sun editor Kelvin MacKenzie’s apology</p> <p>“Very positive outcome. 23 yrs waiting for the truth next step justice.” - Kenny Dalglish on Twitter after the police cover-up at Hillsborough was finally exposed</p> <p>“There were two disasters at Hillsborough, one on the day and one afterwards. There was a contrived, manipulated, vengeful and spiteful attempt to divert the blame.” - Trevor Hicks</p> <p>“Gerrard has good skills, unlike normal English players” - Zlatan Ibrahimovic</p> <p>“That’s how it is with the English: if you score against them you’re a good player; if you don’t, you’re not.” - Zlatan Ibrahimovic after his wonder goal against England in November</p> <p>“An overhead kick from 35 yards when the ball’s six feet in the air – only certain players can do that. He’s not everyone’s cup of tea but he’s certainly mine.” - Steven Gerrard</p>	<p>“Football’s a sport which has become so commercial. It may be thought by some to have lost its way” - Lord Justice (Anthony) Leonard</p> <p>“I’m a fantastic football manager. I’m not a hard-headed businessman.” - Harry Redknapp answering tax-evasion charges in court</p> <p>“You have 12 people that are going to decide to finish your life, basically. And you find yourself being questioned by a man who’s probably 100 times better educated than I am, a clever man who’s probably gone to Eton. I’m standing there uneducated, really, and I have to try to stand your corner.” - Redknapp on being acquitted</p> <p>“I feel really bad for Harry, especially as my biggest success turned out so unlucky for him. He deserved Champions League football. Spurs were rock-bottom when Harry came in. All of a sudden they’re playing in the Champions League and competing at the top. He certainly didn’t deserve to lose his job.” - Frank Lampard on uncle Harry’s sacking by Tottenham and Chelsea’s European triumph giving them Spurs’ Champions League place</p> <p>“If I were playing Spain, the Brazil 1970 side would win, no doubt. We set the standard others are measured by. We had better players than Spain, who have only two or three great players” - Pele</p> <p>“Spain have had an unbelievable amount of sex, er, success.” - Alan Shearer</p> <p>“After watching the England-Italy game, I think Rooney only understands Scottish. That’s because he plays well only in Manchester, where Ferguson speaks Scottish.” - Fabio Capello</p> <p>“Hart looked very confident with himself, so I thought we had to bring him down a peg or two.” - Andrea Pirlo after his chipped penalty in the shoot-out win over England</p> <p>“I like Balotelli: he’s even crazier than me. He can score a winner, then set fire to the hotel.” - Zlatan Ibrahimovic</p> <p>“Jamie Carragher, the only man who can make John Bishop sound like</p>	<p>Brian Sewell.” - Andy Dawson, Mirror TV critic, on the ITV pundit 12. Ready to crumble</p> <p>“I miss Manchester, especially the apple crumble and custard they served at Carrington after training.” - Cristiano Ronaldo</p> <p>“People dislike Ronaldo because he’s a great player, good-looking and has sex with all the ladies. They get jealous. The only bad thing about Ronaldo’s life is Messi. But for him, he would’ve been the best player in the world for five years in a row.” - Luiz Felipe Scolari</p> <p>“If I could, I’d vote for myself. Being too humble isn’t good. In Portugal, we say ‘Too much humility is vanity.’” - Ronaldo on the Ballon d’Or 14. The Old Infirm</p> <p>“Welcome to the Third Division.” - Banner across a roundabout as Gers fans entered Peterhead</p> <p>“If Rangers and Celtic had been given the nod they would’ve gone to the English Premiership and never looked back. Suddenly I’m supposed to be lectured by Walter Smith and others about how bad it is for Scottish football that Rangers are where they are? They’d have left us, saying: ‘Get on with yer diddy league.’” - Turnbull Hutton, Raith Rovers chairman</p> <p>“I’ve said my piece and will now slip back into semi-anonymity. It’s time for my wife to be seen with me in public without having to wear a burkha.” - Turnbull Hutton</p> <p>“The SPL threw us out, stole our money due for last year and are pursuing us to strip titles. It’s like coming home, finding your wife in bed with the milkman, asking for a divorce and then a week later asking: ‘Can you forgive me? We’ll make up.’” - Charles Green, Rangers’ “newco” chief executive</p> <p>“He wears the club shop, Tony Pulis, he wears the club shop” - Stoke crowd salute the manager’s dress sense</p> <p>“Where you you when you were us?” - AFC Wimbledon fans wax philosophical at MK Dons</p> <p>- The Independent</p>
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The Deaprtment Of Youth Prepares To Shine In 2013



**Latin
Wrap**

By Francis Fields

Words such as “juveniles”, “infantiles”, “cantera” or “cadetes” are all synonymous Spanish language terms used to describe junior and youth football. Mainly boys and girls but it is the coaches for example that are coming out with some very interesting views.

Looking at Lizardo Garrido for example with Colo-Colo, the former defender said last week that the club is going through an important social change.

“Colo-Colo is developing a social issue”, emphasising the importance of having proper football structures in place from the bottom-up in the pyramid.

Now at the top of the youth structure, he placed the professionalism that is need from a ripe age in order to “make a difference”.

Working with the Escuela de Fútbol Monumental in the commune of Macul with over 650 children, they train at all conditions, rain, hail or shine.

With facilities now top notch, and a tradition spanning for decades.

“Across the country there are 12,000 children who have dreams and are learning, training hard with our white-coloured jersey. They are who make the club. It is the people who make in this, a football institution with aunts, uncles, parents.. thousands of people!”

THE YOUTH GET READY

With the holiday season in full swing, it goes without saying that partying hard is synonymous to Latin America.

There are of course strict pre-season regimes across clubs, countless player and coach signings and news, news and heaps of news.

2013 for example for Mexico will be exciting. Their new and emerging generation took third place at the U-20 World Cup in Colombia, and this year’s team could be even better over in Turkey.

Led by the likes of the electric pairing of Jesús Corona and Cándido Ramirez, this team has attacking talent in spades and defensive security to match any team in the world. In fact, this version of El Tri’s U-20s has travelled the world over the last year winning titles far and wide: in Asia, Europe, and of course across the Americas.

Given that the U-20s are the next generation to really make a difference at full team level, this group of U-20s is set to make Mexico as proud as ever.



The scenic Andes Mountains will overlook the upcoming U/17 and U/20 South American qualifiers.

Expect them to roll through qualifying at home in Puebla without losing a game but anything may happen in the lead up, as Mexico surely are one of the favorites to lift the U-20 World Cup this European summer.

Next Wednesday across Argentina, CONMEBOL’s U-20 tournament will take place in San Juan and Mendoza.

In Group A, the hosts play Bolivia, Chile, Colombia and Paraguay while in Group B, holders Brazil as favourites play Ecuador, Peru, Uruguay and Venezuela.

The U-17 tournament will be held in Ecuador from the 2nd of April to the 26th.

Four berths are up for grabs in both tournaments. Stay tuned.

Messi admits Argentina underperform

Lionel Messi has confessed that he wishes he was as successful with Argentina as he has been with Barcelona.

The attacker has often been accused of caring more about the fortunes of his club side than his national team, but the 25-year-old superstar said he wants nothing more than for his South American nation to succeed under his captaincy.

“I wish we could win as many titles as we can in Barcelona and qualify for the World Cup with Argentina,” the 25-year-old told Ole.

“I’ve had many nice moments with the national team and others that were not so good. Throughout this last year, we have en-

joyed things and got together. I always expect to improve in everything, and that includes my career.”

The three-time Ballon d’Or winner also extended his best wishes to Tito Vilanova after the Barca coach underwent surgery following a cancer relapse last month.

“Tito lives together with us (in Barcelona) and for him I give my best wishes that his health gets better,” Messi added. “Outside of work, I always ask for health, which is the most important thing.”

Brazil duo still wanted at Spurs

Tottenham manager Andre Villas-Boas is still interested in Shakhtar Donesk midfielder Willian and International forward Leandro Damiao.

The pair, who both featured for Brazil at international level, were linked with Spurs during the summer and Portuguese boss Villas-Boas has reinstated his admiration for the duo.

Speaking about Willian he told Lancenet: “We contacted Willian and he is one of the players in which we had an interest. I like his style but we could not reach a deal with Shakhtar in the summer.

“Shakhtar are a tough club to negotiate with; they don’t need the money, they can keep their players.”

Villas-Boas also had high praise for Damiao, who was one of the

key players in the Brazilian team that won a Silver medal at the 2012 Olympics.

He added: “There are many good players here, we are happy, but we obviously follow the best players and youngsters and Leandro Damiao fits in the profile.

“Leandro was spectacular at the Olympics but there are other interesting players. We are paying attention to his progress but he had injuries after the Olympics and may not have played that often.

“If he is within our reach, he’ll always be in our list.”

Wigan sign United striker Henriquez on loan

Wigan Athletic have announced the signing of Manchester United striker Angelo Henriquez on loan until the end of the season.

The 18-year-old joined the Old Trafford side in August 2012, but has yet to make his first-team debut after finding himself behind the likes of Robin van Persie and Javier Hernandez in the pecking order.

Wigan boss Roberto Martinez has expressed delight at the short-term capture of the Chile international, who could make his debut in Saturday’s FA Cup clash with Bournemouth.

“We’re really excited about Angelo because he is a very young man with a huge potential; he’s a goal-scorer with clever movement inside the box and has had a very successful time with

his former club Universidad,” Martinez told the club’s official website.

“We hope to have a good partnership in terms of allowing Angelo to develop as a footballer and learn of the demands of the English game, because I feel he can bring us something different in the forward line.

“I’m sure the fans will give him a great welcome on Saturday and it will provide him with the perfect opportunity to begin his experiences on the pitch in English football which is very exciting.”

Henriquez, who will wear the number 11 shirt at the DW Stadium, also revealed his excitement at the prospect of lining up for Wigan.

“This is a fantastic opportunity for me and I am really excited after the manager has given this chance for me to prove myself. Now I need to work to try and earn my place in the team,” he said.

The Santiago-born forward made his full international debut in November, replacing Alexis Sanchez in a defeat to Serbia and going on to net his first goal.

Platt confirms Aguero injury Manchester City’s Sergio Aguero is set to be sidelined for several weeks after picking up a hamstring injury in the 3-0 win over Stoke City.

The Argentina international bagged his side’s third goal from the penalty spot on Tuesday following strikes from Pablo Za-

baleta and Edin Dzeko, before limping from the field to be replaced by Carlos Tevez.

Following the victory, City assistant manager David Platt confirmed Aguero is set to miss this weekend’s FA Cup third-round tie with Watford, while the 24-year-old is also a doubt for the trip to Arsenal in the Premier League the following week.

“It’s bad enough, he won’t play on Saturday,” Platt said.

“It’s difficult to assess an injury like that (and) how long it’s going to be.

“Saturday he’ll be out and my experience would say he’d be doubtful for Arsenal.”

Aguero missed a stint earlier in the season through injury, and Platt remained cautious when estimating how long the forward could be sidelined for with this latest setback.

“There’s different degrees of hamstring (injury), that’s why you need 48 hours (to assess). It’s not just ‘it’s a hamstring and this is how long it’s going to be’, there are different degrees of the tear that are in there.

“It’s far too early, I haven’t got the qualities to scan his legs. There’ll be a lot of swelling in there, a bit of bleeding in there.

“We won’t know for 48 hours how long it’s going to be and how quick it’s going to settle down. Of course it’s a blow, but I think that’s what you run the risk of.”



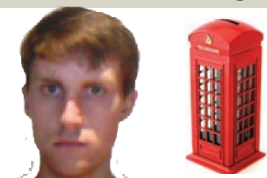
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London Calling



By Samuel Collins

As millions pulled the corks on their Moët & Chandon on Monday night, certain gentlemen around Europe might have been settling down with a strong cup of Nescafé instead.

The turn of the year signalled the opening of the European transfer window, and executives, managers and agents across the continent would have been readying the fax machines and topping up their mobile phones. While the footballing market is traditionally more operative towards the end of January, talks between clubs are ongoing throughout the month, and several executives and coaches know exactly what they need to add to their side in the next 30 days.

Sir Alex Ferguson might have ruled out any new signings for Premier league leaders Manchester United in December, but experience suggests the long-serving Scot could be bluffing. Champions Manchester City plan to be active in the window. With the Toure brothers heading to the African nations and Joleon Lescott set for a move away, a central defender is reportedly top of Roberto Mancini's shortlist. Marseille's young Cameroonian centre-half Nicolas N'Koulou has been monitored for some time, while Stoke's solid stopper Ryan

Movement expected as market opens



Balotelli: AC Milan bound?

Shawcross is also amongst those being scouted. Though Vincent Kompany's current defensive partner Matija Nastasi has done ok, an upgrade in this department is evidently needed. Potentially heading out of the Etihad is Mario Balotelli. The enigmatic Italian has endured a topsy-turvy career in Manchester, though it seems Mancini has finally lost patience with the forward - AC Milan are the favourites for his signature.

Chelsea's disappointing first half of the campaign means inevitable participation in the window. With Daniel Sturridge set to join Liverpool, a new striker is firmly on the Blue's radar. Roman Abramovich is no stranger to the January window; two years ago, the Russian owner splashed out £73m on David Luiz and Fernando Torres. Radamel Falcao remains the dream signing - the



Falcao: Chelsea bound?

Atletico Madrid superstar has a £48m release clause - though the extreme price tag might be enough to scare off even Chelsea. Talks with Demba Ba have broken down, while the possibility of recalling Romelu Lukaku - who cost £18m last summer and is currently at West Brom on loan - is plausible. In terms of outgoing from Stamford Bridge, stalwarts Ashley Cole and Frank Lampard are now free to speak with other clubs as their contracts with the European champions enter the last few months. Replacements for both Englishmen will be needed should either exit, while the departures of both Victor Moses and John Obi Mikel to the African Nations could force interim coach Rafael Benitez into transfer action even further this month.

A club who often stay quiescent during the mid-season market are Arsenal. However, manager



Champagne on ice....

Arsene Wenger has already confirmed his side will be "active" and "looking everywhere" for new additions. A centre-forward to support Theo Walcott and Olivier Giroud is expected to join, though arrivals potentially depend on how many current stars the Londoners can offload; Andrey Arshavin, Marouane Chamakh and Andre Santos are all tipped to leave. Barcelona's David Villa continues to be linked with the Gunners, though Newcastle striker Demba Ba's £7.5m release clause makes him the more viable option. Atletico's Adrian Lopez has been watched closely, as has Wilfried Zaha (Crystal Palace). It's set to be the club's busiest January window since 2006.

Elsewhere in the Premier League, Tottenham have insisted they are "highly unlikely" to be on the market, though rumours indicate that Porto's Joao

Moutinho could still be brought in during the month, while Newcastle boss Alan Pardew wants to add three players to his roster. A deal has already been concluded for France right-back Mathieu Debuchy, who has joined from Lille for what looks to be a bargain fee of £5m. Another incomer from Ligue 1 could be Loic Remy of Marseille, who is set to replace Ba should the Senegalese leave the Magpies. Along with £12m Sturridge, Liverpool are hopeful of bringing back former player Thomas Ince to Anfield from Blackpool, while offloading the likes of Joe Cole (probably to QPR) is equally imperative. Bottom of the table Queens Park Rangers will be immersed in the window, with coach Harry Redknapp extensively experienced in this area of the game. Clermont's midfielder Yacouba Sylla has been heavily linked with QPR, but proven quality in the shape of Michael Dawson (Spurs) and Nicolas Anelka (Shanghai Shenhua) is what Redknapp needs most. Whether or not owner Tony Fernandes will sanction heavy spending with the club languishing deep in the relegation zone remains to be seen.

£57m was spent by Premier League clubs in January 2012, a huge decrease on the £220m lavished twelve months earlier. That total of two years ago is unlikely to be reached again this month, with agent Leon Angel from Base Soccer predicting "a lot of loan signings" and possibly "a major deal at the top end of January."

Tedious days and nights of negotiating lie ahead this month. For many, the Moët is on ice until February 1st.

IN OFF THE POST

mailbag@goalweekly.com

Vent your spleen at mailbag@goalweekly.com or PO Box 142, Port Melbourne, VIC, 3207.

G'day football fans and all the team at Goal! Weekly,

Happy New Year to all!

CCMFC on top will end up with the Premiers Plate again (no need for the helicopter).

CCMFC v WSWFC for the Grand Final, that is my prediction for 2013. Great game at Parramatta Stadium last night, i wonder what the anti-football media will make of the game and the crowd.

A point to make about the SUMMER schedule and the kick off times,

Firstly, i agree with Graham Arnold that they should be 6+1gk on the bench, this will allow felixable decisions to be made on subs,

Secondly, stop this absurd 3pm/4pm/5pm kick offs, only FOXTEL likes them.

Thirdly, Melb Heart should try for 9pm kick offs on Fri and Sat nights, much better playing conditions. I am sure the fans would like that as well.

Finally, I must credit the FOXSPORTS team both Football and News on highlighting the GK efforts on the great saves done in the games so far this year, as a member of the goalkeepers brotherhood, the saves don't get much of a mention especially with the anti-football media.

Yours in Football
Les 'Crazy' Farkas
Sydney, NSW

Balkan Wrap

By Alex Milic

Serbia
Chelsea FC defender Branislav Ivanovic has been named as Serbia's Player of the Year, receiving the Football Association of Serbia (FSS) Golden Ball award at a ceremony as Dragomir Okuka was named coach of the year.

The 28-year-old Serbia captain received the award for the first time in its eight-year history at the end of a year in which he won the UEFA Champions League with his club Chelsea and was one of the finest defenders in Europe last season.

Ivanovic says, "This award means a lot to me. When you are named the best in your country, it is a reward for everything you have achieved up to now. I am happy, but I want to say thanks for my family and all of my team-mates, from my club and the national team - they helped me to get where I am today. Now the onus is on me to maintain this standard, and even improve on it."

After a spell with second-flight FK Srem, Ivanovic established himself in the Serbian Superliga with OFK Beograd, before moving to Russia to join FC Lokomotiv

Moskva in January 2006, and then heading on to Stamford Bridge two years later. Once captain of the Serbian Under-21 team with which he played two Under-21 European Championships Finals, he has now scored seven goals in 57 senior international appearances and took part in the 2010 World Cup in South Africa.

The prize for Serbia's best coach went to Dragomir Okuka, who this season led Chinese side Jiangsu Sainty FC to a second-placed finish in their league - an achievement that also netted the one-time FK Velež winger a coach of the year award in China two weeks ago. "Every award makes you happy, but this one will have a special place in my heart," explained the 58-year-old, who led FK Obilic to their only national title in 1997/98. "At the moment, I am working far from my home, so the recognition from the people from the FSS is very much appreciated. I am very, very proud."

Croatia
FC Bayern München forward Mario Mandzukic reflected on his "most successful season yet" after he was elected Croatian player of the year.

The 26-year-old collected 104 points in the 41st edition of the poll run by national newspaper Vecernji list, finishing just ahead of Real Madrid CF midfielder Luka Modric on 93.

Mandzukic says, "This award



Branislav Ivanovic (left) with Branimir Okuka.

means a lot to me and will motivate me to do even better - my best is still to come," he said. "My moment of the year was EURO 2012, I think about it a lot. That atmosphere and emotion was something special."

Mandzukic illuminated Croatia's campaign in Poland and Ukraine, even if his three goals were not enough for them to advance from the group stage. By the end of that tournament he had sealed a switch from VfL Wolfsburg to Bayern where the goals have continued to flow, with nine goals in 15 Bundesliga appearances for

Germany's runaway leaders

Bosnia
The Bosnia and Herzegovina Football Federation (NFSBiH) received a special recognition for the implementation of its grassroots programmes in 2012 during a ceremony hosted by the Bosnian Olympic Committee (OCBiH).

Held at the Olympic museum in Zetra, the evening ceremony to decide the country's best sportsman or woman of 2012 devoted a section to the NFSBiH's work in pro-

moting activities across all areas of non-professional football. These activities - in soccer for youth, veterans, people with special needs and disabilities, orphans, the homeless, women and girls, and schools - were duly applauded.

The NFSBiH, a member of the UEFA Grassroots Charter since 2009, was acknowledged not only for the sporting role it plays through this grassroots work but also for its engagement in wider social responsibility and the development of friendship and sporting values.

Stoke City goalkeeper Asmir

Begovic was named Bosnian Footballer of the Year. Miroslav Stevanovic has signed for Spanish side Sevilla from Serbian Super-Liga club FK Vojvodina in deal estimated to be worth 1 million euros. Slovenia

Srecko Katanec has been reappointed Slovenia coach, with hopes high that he can repeat the feats during his first spell when he guided the team to their first two major final tournaments.

The 49-year-old has been in talks with Aleksander Ceferin, president of the Football Association of Slovenia, for the past fortnight following the resignation of Slaviša Stojanovic on 11 December. Katanec will have just over a month to prepare for his first test, a friendly against Bosnia and Herzegovina on 6 February, but FIFA World Cup qualification is the long-term aim. He has been successful in that endeavour before, following up an appearance at UEFA EURO 2000 by seeing the team through to the World Cup two years later. The former Yugoslavia defender resigned after Japan/South Korea and has since coached Olympiacos FC and the national teams of the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and the United Arab Emirates.

Katanec, who will be formally unveiled on Friday, is expected to be assisted by Aleš Ceh and Željko Milinovic, with Nihad Pejkoć acting as goalkeeping coach. Slovenia lie fifth after four games in Group E.

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as roma



EPL

Wrap

By Andrew Bishara

United Enjoying Festive Period

“We’re halfway there,” said Sir Alex Ferguson as 2012 ended and the New Year begun. “We’re in a good position. It’s important, though, we do not sit looking at the league table, admiring our position, positive though it is, because we would soon get a rude awakening”

But they didn’t get their rude awakening. United easily brushed aside Wigan in a 4-0 rout, with “complete footballer” (Ferguson yet again) Robin Van Persie netting a double.

It is said that its during the festive period that the really title challengers make their mark. United therefore have really stamped their mark. In the space of ten days and four games all crammed in, United have taken a well-earned ten points out of twelve. The only slip-up, the 1-1 draw with Swansea.

That result apart, United were ruthless in their displays, dismantling Wigan, West Bromwich and that sparkling, back to the walls performance against Newcastle. Eleven goals scored, five conceded.

The same cannot be said for champions, Manchester City. Taking nine points isn’t poor form, but it’s their performances that have drawn criticism. They just beat Reading, a team floundering with relegation, thanks to a last-gasp



Man U are sitting pretty as the EPL heads into its business end.

(and some-what controversial) goal courtesy of Gareth Barry. They lost to Sunderland, a performance in which Roberto Mancini gave the “hairdryer” treatment to his strike force.

“We didn’t deserve to lose, we dominated this game, I don’t know how it’s possible that we didn’t win this game, but every year it is the same,” He told BBC Sport post match.

“I’m frustrated at this because it’s impossible that our strikers don’t score but we have this problem, we don’t score enough to win the game. This is a big problem at the moment.”

The big problem of the strike force is that the “quartet” is really struggling to click into the right gears. Edin Dzeko is their top scorer, but hardly plays; Sergio Aguero has been plagued with injuries (and will miss the next two weeks); Carlos Tevez is blowing hot and cold and Mario Balotelli isn’t interested in playing, it looks like.

The side did responded to Mancini’s outburst, but it hasn’t been easy for them. They might have scored four against Norwich, but they conceded three and had to

hold on to win, thanks for Samir Nasri’s foolish red card in the first half. City also put three past Stoke City, even though two goals were courtesy of goalkeeping blunders and the third a penalty.


It’s all City can do for now. Collect the points when they can, bring up the goals tally and keep pace with United. They need more over the next four and half months if they want to keep the title.

As for United, they are now in pole-position. The title isn’t over by any means. Ferguson knows about last year: 8 points clear and five games left and they still lost the title. He will keep his men on their toes.

This is of course assuming that the title is heading to Manchester. Rafael Benitez might be the most-hated man at Stamford Bridge right, but there is no doubting his Chelsea side have grown over the past couple of weeks. With a game in hand, they could sneak up on United and City. But that’s a story for another day.

FA CUP Preview.
The Premier League takes a week off to bring the fans the oldest football cup competition

ENGLAND EPL



Last5games
Most recent first

	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts	
1 Manchester United	21	17	1	3	54	28	+26	52	W W W D W
2 Manchester City	21	13	6	2	41	19	+22	45	W W L W W
3 Tottenham Hotspur	21	12	3	6	39	27	+12	39	W W W D W
4 Chelsea	20	11	5	4	39	19	+20	38	L W W W W
5 Everton	21	9	9	3	35	26	+9	36	W L W W D
6 Arsenal	20	9	7	4	40	22	+18	34	D W W W W
7 West Bromwich ...	21	10	3	8	29	27	+2	33	L W W W D
8 Liverpool	21	8	7	6	34	26	+8	31	W W L W L
9 Swansea City	21	7	8	6	31	26	+5	29	D W D D L
10 Stoke City	21	6	11	4	21	20	+1	29	L D W D D
11 West Ham United	20	7	5	8	24	24	+0	26	W L L D L
12 Norwich City	21	6	7	8	24	34	-10	25	L L L L W
13 Fulham	21	6	6	9	32	37	-5	24	W D L D L
14 Sunderland	21	5	7	9	21	29	-8	22	L L W W L
15 Newcastle United	21	5	5	11	27	39	-12	20	L L L W L
16 Aston Villa	21	4	7	10	17	41	-24	19	D L L L W
17 Southampton	20	4	6	10	27	38	-11	18	D D L L W
18 Wigan Athletic	21	5	3	13	22	39	-17	18	L W L L L
19 Reading	21	2	7	12	23	40	-17	13	L W D L L
20 QPR	21	2	7	12	17	36	-19	13	W L L L W

in the world, the FA Cup. It’s the third round of the tournament, which means that Premier League teams finally make their appearances.

And with that means, a host of Premier League ties will be contested over the weekend. We’ll start with last year’s cup holders, Chelsea. The reigning winners travel to St. Mary’s Stadium to take on Southampton. Rafael Benitez has made a promising start to his Chelsea career, despite fans baying for his blood. They’ve won their last three games, looking a more effective unit in both offensive and defensive departments. Southampton has tighten up in the back, but they are still deep in relegation.

Arsenal too has been revived after a dreadful period of form. Like their London counterparts, have a tough clash, as they head to Wales to take on Michael Laudrup’s Arsenal-esqu side, Swansea. The last time, the Gunners lost was against the Swans, when they put the Gunners at the Emirates. With the league title out of the sight and a very tough prospect in the Champions League, this is best chance for Arsenal to break their drought. However, Arsene Wenger always

put a secondary squad in FA Cup. Considering their predicament, he shouldn’t.

Manchester United also have tricky tie, having to face Sam Allardyce’s West Ham at Upton Park. United are in devastating form at the moment and will be hoping to take their league form into the cup competition. Expect Sir Alex Ferguson to make a host of changes to the squad – both to give some of his lesser known a run on the pitch and keeping them fresh for the title challenge. West Ham have eased their way into the Premier League, battling all the big teams. They will provide United with a stern test here.

Rivals and English champions Manchester City face lowly league opposition, as they are set to play against Watford at the Etihad, but will be looking to kick-start a lagging season, in where they have never really, we’ll kicked-started.

Mancini’s side hasn’t looked at all like the team of last season, struggling to score goals and leaking goals like a cheese-grater. The failure in Europe means that Mancini should be focusing his efforts on claiming the Cup.

For some of the other teams who

got the lucky draw are last year’s runners-up, Liverpool who travel to One Call Stadium to take on Mansfield Town, a conference team. So too did Tottenham Hotspur, welcoming Coventry City to White Hart Lane. Stoke City travel to Crystal Palace, Reading face Crawley Town, Aston Villa face Ipswich Town, while Sunderland travel to former Premier League outfit, Bolton Wanderers.

Fulham welcome Blackpool, while Norwich City travel to Peterborough United. Cheltenham Town welcomes David Moyes’ high-flying Everton and Wigan Athletic will be inviting lowly AFC Bournemouth.

Bottom-placed QPR will be hoping to put a horrible 2012 behind them when they take on West Bromwich Albion in another all premier clash. West Brom though are a complete new outfit under Steve Clarke.

This third round of England’s oldest competition will hopefully bring back all the romance and excitement of all the previous years. Anyone and I mean anyone can win the Cup. Bring it on.



London Eye



By Eddie Gray

Whenever you mention Stoke City a series of groans, moans and tuts follow without fail.

Ever since their arrival in the Barclays Premier League in 2008 their direct, physical and strong approach has been criticised by many and deemed by some as ‘anti-football’.

But year after year The Potters survive relegation, in spite of their doubters, with far greater comfort than other sides who attempt to play ‘prettier football’ and have built on the foundations they have set themselves, with their approach not just maintaining a constant mid table league position.

They made the FA cup final in 2011, losing to Manchester City 1-0 in the final, and as a result went on to compete in Europe, reaching the first round knockout stages of the Europa League in the process, despite sticking to their specific style of play.

So what makes Tony Pulis’s men so effective?

To start with they have made the Britannia stadium the most feared away ground in the division.

A narrow pitch enables the home side to utilise their long throws, first with Rory Delap and now Ryan Shotton and Geoff Cameron, which sees them bombard the penalty

area with numerous bodies, putting the opposing goalkeeper and defence under great pressure, creating errors and second balls from which to feed off.

Secondly the fans who turn out to support their side are amongst the loudest in the world.

The atmosphere created at the Britannia can often spark a revival if their side are behind as well as providing unquestioned and unconditional support no matter what the score line.

However it is their on field factors that really make Stoke the force that they are.

Pulis has assembled a tall and powerful squad which works tirelessly and they religiously follow whatever instructions they have been given by their boss. This endeavour and work rate keeps the opposition under pressure throughout the 90 minutes which forces mistakes in dangerous areas. When these errors are made they look to capitalise as quickly as possible, with a ball into either Peter Crouch or Kenwyne Jones the top priority, followed by a second phase of play in which the support runners from midfield aim to pounce on the second ball and keep the momentum their side going.

The recruitment of players under Pulis has often not got the praise it has deserved, a recurring theme where Stoke are concerned, but when you delve deeper and look closely at who he has brought to the club his activity in the transfer market is often astute.

The transfer of Crouch is the most high profile in the clubs history and the rangy front man has slotted brilliantly into the system deployed



Pulis works Stoke magic

at the Britannia but it is his lesser money deals which have been the most impressive.

Matthew Etherington was the first bargain buy which really stood out. Joining the club for a rumoured £2,000,000, his out and out wing play troubled full backs with his delivery in particular, which was both quick and accurate, being extremely effective, especially with big targets such as Ricardo Fuller, James Beattie and Mamady Sidibe to aim for.

Another stand out, cut priced purchase was the acquisition of Jonathan Walters from Ipswich. The utility forward has been worth

his weight in gold since his arrival and epitomises everything Stoke are about, with his work rate being second to none in the division.

To capture the striker for a mere £2.75 million is extraordinary in this day and age and the Republic of Ireland international has repaid the faith shown in him by Pulis by adding goals and assists to his game which has seen him become a feared force.

But why is Stoke’s philosophy still not highly regarded by outsiders, after all it’s success is un-debatable?

Simply because the majority of fans insist on their team keeping

the ball on the floor whilst playing with attacking flair and imagination, regardless of results or previous triumphs.

But as so many have found it is not always possible to achieve the ideal, especially when the quality of players are usually not up to the required standard to fit the system.

So it’s still highly surprising for some sides to pursue a total football philosophy, and even more so for their fans to demand it, when the accomplishments of Stoke are easily visible and tested.

Swansea and West Brom aside, there are very few newly promoted outfits which have excelled in the

Latest Results	This Week
WBA 1 - 2 Fulham	Aston Villa v Southampton
Man City 3 - 0 Stoke City	Everton v Swansea City
Swansea City 2 - 2Aston Villa	Fulham v Wigan Athletic
Tottenham 3 - 1 Reading	Norwich City v Newcastle Utd
West Ham 2 - 1 Norwich City	Reading v West Bromwich
Wigan Athletic 0 - 4 Man Utd	Stoke City v Chelsea
Southampton 1 - 1Arsenal	Sunderland v West Ham Utd
Chelsea 0-1 QPR	Man Utd v Liverpool
Liverpool 3-0 Sunderland	Arsenal v Manchester City
Newcastle Utd 1-2 Everton	QPR v Tottenham Hotspur

One To Watch This Weekend...
After making the semi finals last season, will Tottenham go one step further? Andre Villas-Boas side is on a high at the moment, so a slip-up could be on the cards. They take on a Coventry City, where a shock result might not be a surprise.



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Wrap Italia

By Luca Cetta

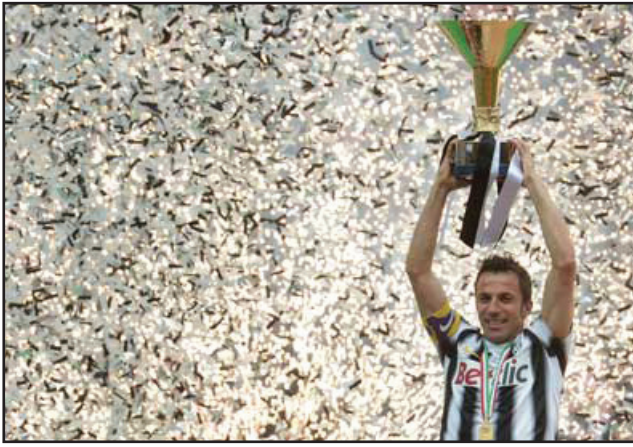
Crowning a memorable 2012

Serie A resumes this weekend after its winter hiatus. Before looking ahead to what we have in store for 2013, here is a look back at the good, bad and ugly from the world of calcio in the past calendar year.

2012 may be consigned to the history books, but it left many memorable moments. In true calcio fashion, the bad and bizarre seem to outweigh the good. While there is enough positivity to keep us coming back for more, there are also moments we wished would never occur.

Juventus headed into the winter break holding an eight point advantage over the nearest challengers, aiming for back-to-back championships. Victory over Cagliari was the culmination of an incredible 12 months. Those three points helped break the record for most points accumulated in a calendar year, their 94-point haul one better than Fabio Capello's Juve in 2005.

It was a year in which the Old Lady reclaimed her place atop the Italian game. Their first – official – Scudetto since 2002-03 was secured in the Trieste rain. Juve's 2-0 win and Milan's 4-2 derby loss versus Inter gave Antonio Conte's men a long awaited Scudetto triumph. A week later they would emotionally



Juve fans wave goodbye to Alessandro Del Piero who had given 19 years of service to the new – and unbeaten – Serie A champs. Next stop Sydney!

farewell Alessandro Del Piero from Turin. While one piece of Juve history departed they would continue their unbeaten streak, which commenced at the tail-end of 2010-11. When closing in on Milan's 58-game record, it came to a crashing end against Inter, to stand at 49 matches.

Juve also claimed August's Super Cup, defeating Napoli. They were denied a hat-trick of trophies by the Partneopei in May's Coppa Italia showpiece. Napoli had been on the verge of the Champions League last eight, but succumbed to eventual winners Chelsea. Yet they would not end the season empty-handed. Goals from Edinson Cavani and Marek Hamsik guaranteed a first trophy since 1991 – the last year of the Diego Maradona era.

With the final whistle in Rome, the club season drew to a close. Attention turned to Ukraine and Poland for the European Championships. Italy faced a daunting

opener against Spain, but the 1-1 draw proved the best game of the tournament and a signal of Azzurri prowess. Cesare Prandelli's team would make the Final after knocking out England and Germany, the latter thanks to a fantastic performance. Euro 2012 rekindled the nation's love affair with the national team, but the dream of lifting the Cup would be shattered by the Spanish in the decider. Calcio united for positive reasons during June, but two months earlier it did so under tragic circumstances. Piermario Morosini took the field in Livorno's Serie B clash at Pescara. Just part the half-hour mark he collapsed. Trying to get up, Moro once more fell, and never stood again. The 25-year-old suffered cardiac arrest and was pronounced dead on arrival at a local hospital.

His death shocked Italy and the football world. All Serie A matches that weekend were cancelled, while tributes flowed

ITALY

Serie A



	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts	Last5games Most recent first
1 Juventus	18	14	2	2	39	11	+28	44	W W W W L
2 Lazio	18	11	3	4	26	18	+8	36	W W D W W
3 Fiorentina	18	10	5	3	36	19	+17	35	W W L D D
4 Internazionale	18	11	2	5	30	19	+11	35	D L W W L
5 Napoli	18	11	3	4	33	17	+16	34	W L L W W
6 Roma	18	10	2	6	42	29	+13	32	W L W W W
7 Milan	18	8	3	7	34	26	+8	27	L W W W W
8 Parma	18	7	5	6	25	24	+1	26	W W L L W
9 Catania	18	7	4	7	26	27	-1	25	L W L L L
10 Udinese	18	5	9	4	26	26	+0	24	D D W W L
11 Atalanta	18	7	3	8	18	27	-9	22	D L W L L
12 Chievo	18	6	3	9	20	29	-9	21	L W W W D
13 Torino	18	4	8	6	20	22	-2	19	W D L L D
14 Bologna	18	5	3	10	21	24	-3	18	L W D W L
15 Sampdoria	18	5	3	10	20	27	-7	17	L L L D W
16 Pescara	18	5	2	11	15	35	-20	17	W L W L L
17 Cagliari	18	4	4	10	16	33	-17	16	L L L L L
18 Palermo	18	3	6	9	15	27	-12	15	D L L L L
19 Genoa	18	3	5	10	18	30	-12	14	D D L L W
20 Siena	18	4	5	9	16	26	-10	11	L L L L D

from throughout the peninsula and beyond. The Udinese-owned midfielder was a battler, having lost both parents and disabled brother during his teenage years. Morosini also cared for his disabled sister. Udinese declared they would look after her.

That was where the goodwill ended. For where football can unite, it also deeply divides. The match fixing scandal and its aftermath was a prime example. Mud-slinging was in order, as stories of players paid off to score own goals, with others attempting to bring teammates into the equation and implicating others.

Conte faced an accusation of not reporting match fixing to the authorities by ex-Siena player and fixer Filippo Carobbio. This gave Conte a touchline ban, as he unloaded at the 'guilty until proven innocent' method of justice. It is a situation Napoli also currently face, with Paolo Cannavaro and Gianluca Grava suspended. Siena and Atalanta were amongst a number of

clubs in multiple divisions starting with points deductions, while Lecce were relegated. A number of players were banned.

When Milan faced Juventus in February, calcio's sense of paranoia reached overload. In what was billed as a crucial Scudetto contest, the Rossoneri were denied a second goal when the officials missed Sulley Muntari's shot crossing the line. Juventus later had a goal wrongly disallowed. The bitterness and hostilities that emanated from both camps are still felt to this day. Cagliari's ongoing stadium battles bordered on ridiculous. President Massimo Cellino moved their home matches over 500kms away to Trieste because he deemed the Stadio Sant'Elia – Cagliari's home of over 30 years – unsafe. The situation only escalated in the summer as a temporary home was built. The Stadio Is Arenas also encountered safety issues and has only housed all fans on a handful of occasions. Cagliari forfeited their match against Roma when Cellino

declared he would allow fans in despite no council approval, while their final match of the year was moved to Parma.

Genoa also encountered a stadium issue, as fed-up fans caused a temporary halt to a match against Siena. At 4-0 down, Genoa fans threw fireworks on the pitch. They then demanded Rossoblu players remove their shirts, as they were deemed 'unworthy' of them. Because of the disturbances Genoa had to play their last two matches behind closed doors as they just scraped home to avoid relegation. They were just one of a number of clubs to cycle through coaches. Palermo's Massimo Zamparini is notorious for his lack of patience and lived up to his reputation in 2012. One change saw Massimo Sannino sacked after three games, soon after Zampa wished he would stay for five years. Genoa had four coaches, while Cagliari were another to fire at will. On that note at least, it was calcio business as usual during a memorable year.

Mourinho in Madrid Power Struggle As Casillas Sits on The Sidelines



Viva Espana

By Pepe Lopez

Real Madrid Coach Jose Mourinho caused a sensation on the eve of the Spanish La Liga Xmas and New Year Break that any sensible person would realise was the equivalent of a major coaching own goal.

Spanish captain and Real Madrid goalkeeper Iker Casillas, who helped his country win the 2010 World Cup, had not been dropped from first team selection in a decade of football, however just a few hours prior to Real Madrid's away fixture with fellow Spanish Champions League participants, Malaga, Jose Mourinho dropped the bombshell that Iker would be benched, in preference for a 25 year old debutant, Antonio Adan.

Worst was to follow, much, much worse. Adan conceded 3 goals in a 3-2 away loss to Malaga at the La Rosaleda stadium on the Spanish Mediterranean coast line. Jose's major blunder in his decision making process was that



Real Madrid keeper and captain Iker Casillas watched from the bench as his side lost 3-2 to Malaga. He has vowed to fight to regain his spot.

this would be Real Madrid's last La Liga match for 2 weeks, and journalists the world over, have little to write about during this time. Effectively, Jose Mourinho has now been written an obituary in every major European sporting publication for his current coaching job at Real Madrid, and the only differing points of view in the media, are which team Jose will coach next season, or if the Jose's situation has become such an untenable position, could Real Madrid possibly even consider replacing Mourinho as their manager prior to the Round of 16 Champions League fixture

against Manchester United in February/March 2013?

Madrid based newspaper, Marca, virtually affiliated with the Real Madrid football club, wrote the headline "Jose has cut off his own nose", immediately after the embarrassing loss to a theoretically much lesser Spanish contender for the European Champions League, the equivalent of European football's holy grail. The loss also allowed Real Madrid's 2 biggest rivals, 1st placed Barcelona FC extend their lead over Real to 16 points, and 2nd placed Atletico Madrid's lead over Real to 7 points. 4th

SPAIN

La Liga



P

W

D

L

F

A

GD

Pts

Last5Games

Most recent first

1 Barcelona

17

16

1

0

57

19

+38

49

W

W

W

W

W

2 Atlético Madrid

17

13

1

3

37

17

+20

40

W

L

W

L

W

3 Real Madrid

17

10

3

4

41

17

+24

33

L

D

W

L

W

4 Málaga

17

9

4

4

28

12

+16

31

W

W

W

L

W

5 Real Betis

17

9

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7

26

28

-2

28

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W

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W

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6 Levante

17

8

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6

21

24

-3

27

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D

L

7 Real Sociedad

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7

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24

20

+4

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D

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D

8 Rayo Vallecano

17

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8

22

32

-10

25

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W

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L

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9 Valencia

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26

-3

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L

W

L

L

10 Getafe

17

7

3

7

21

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D

W

W

11 Real Valladolid

17

6

4

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23

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D

L

W

W

12 Real Zaragoza

17

7

1

9

20

24

-4

22

W

L

W

D

L

13 Athletic Club

17

6

3

8

21

34

-13

21

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W

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L

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14 Sevilla

17

5

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18 Espanyol

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19 Osasuna

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20 Deportivo La C...

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placed Malaga moved to within just 2 points of 3rd placed Real Madrid.

The tension between Manager Jose Mourinho and Goalkeeper Iker Casillas has been brewing for some time at Real Madrid, along with Sergio Ramos, 2 players who have reprimanded by Jose in the past for being outspoken on all matters Real Madrid with local media. In fact, to such an extent that Mourinho has publicly suggested that his squad is suffering of a team mole or 2. Clearly, the source of the problem is Jose Mourinho's quest for ultimate power of the club that he

was head-hunted to manage, and lead to a possible record breaking 10th European Champions League (aka European Champions Cup) title.

Jose was most recently quoted in Marca with the following comments on the current situation; "I don't see [Casillas] as a monument. For me the monument is Real Madrid and the Real Madrid coach must always do what's best for the team. It's as simple as that. I don't see the need to kick up a fuss or talk about monuments or any of that stuff." Mourinho was later quoted; "Look, I'm staying at Madrid and I want my third

Champions League title, but Juventus concerns me. Saturday's defeat at Malaga made me think long and hard about my situation at Real Madrid. I spent Christmas in Portugal with my family and now I'm in Dubai for the Globe Soccer Awards where I've met up with many friends including Maradona and Capello. We've reached a conclusion: football changes, it changes and it changes almost every day, every minute and every second. Despite this, there is one thing that never changes: the coach always picks the team."



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CROATIA 1.HNL																
	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts	Last5games		Most recent first					
1 Dinamo Zagreb	18	13	2	3	39	14	+25	41	W	L	W	L	W			
2 Hajduk Split	19	9	6	4	27	14	+13	33	W	D	D	D	W			
3 Lokomotiva	19	9	5	5	27	21	+6	32	W	L	W	D	W			
4 Rijeka	19	9	5	5	28	23	+5	32	D	D	W	W	L			
5 Slaven Koprivnica	19	9	4	6	28	26	+2	31	D	W	L	W	L			
6 Split	19	9	3	7	28	22	+6	30	L	W	W	L	W			
7 Osijek	18	5	8	5	19	17	+2	23	L	D	L	D	L			
8 Istra 1961	19	5	5	9	17	22	-5	20	L	D	L	L	W			
9 Inter Zaprešić	19	4	7	8	21	25	-4	19	L	L	L	W	D			
10 Zadar	19	4	5	10	20	36	-16	17	W	D	W	L	W			
11 Cibalia	19	4	4	11	16	31	-15	16	L	D	L	W	L			
12 Zagreb	19	4	4	11	12	31	-19	16	D	W	L	L	L			

GERMANY Bundesliga																
	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts	Last5games		Most recent first					
1 Bayern München	17	13	3	1	44	7	+37	42	D	W	D	W	W			
2 Bayer Leverkusen	17	10	3	4	33	22	+11	33	W	L	W	W	W			
3 Borussia Dortmund	17	8	6	3	35	20	+15	30	W	L	D	D	W			
4 Eintracht Fran...	17	9	3	5	33	27	+6	30	W	W	L	L	D			
5 Freiburg	17	7	5	5	24	18	+6	26	W	W	D	L	W			
6 Mainz 05	17	8	2	7	24	21	+3	26	W	L	W	W	L			
7 Schalke 04	17	7	4	6	27	25	+2	25	L	L	D	L	D			
8 Borussia M'gla...	17	6	7	4	25	26	-1	25	D	W	D	W	D			
9 Stuttgart	17	7	4	6	21	28	-7	25	W	W	W	L	L			
10 Hamburger SV	17	7	3	7	18	21	-3	24	L	W	D	W	L			
11 Hannover 96	17	7	2	8	32	31	+1	23	L	W	L	W	L			
12 Werder Bremen	17	6	4	7	28	29	-1	22	D	L	W	L	D			
13 Fortuna Düsseldorf	17	5	6	6	20	22	-2	21	W	L	W	D	W			
14 Nürnberg	17	5	5	7	17	22	-5	20	D	W	L	W	D			
15 Wolfsburg	17	5	4	8	17	27	-10	19	L	W	D	L	D			
16 Hoffenheim	17	3	3	11	23	41	-18	12	L	L	L	L	L			
17 Augsburg	17	1	6	10	12	29	-17	9	D	L	D	L	D			
18 Greuther Fürth	17	1	6	10	11	28	-17	9	D	L	L	L	D			

THE CHAMPIONSHIP																
	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts	Last5games		Most recent first					
1 Cardiff City	26	18	2	6	48	29	+19	56	W	W	W	W	L			
2 Hull City	26	15	4	7	37	27	+10	49	D	W	D	W	W			
3 Crystal Palace	26	13	8	5	50	34	+16	47	W	D	L	D	D			
4 Middlesbrough	26	15	2	9	46	36	+10	47	L	W	W	L	W			
5 Leicester City	26	13	5	8	44	23	+21	44	W	W	D	L	L			
6 Watford	25	12	4	9	47	36	+11	40	L	W	W	D	L			
7 Millwall	26	11	7	8	39	35	+4	40	W	L	L	D	W			
8 Leeds United	26	11	5	10	38	42	-4	38	W	L	W	W	L			
9 Brighton & Hov...	25	9	10	6	35	26	+9	37	L	W	D	D	D			
10 Derby County	26	10	7	9	40	38	+2	37	W	D	L	L	W			
11 Nottingham Forest	26	9	10	7	36	35	+1	37	L	D	W	L	D			
12 Burnley	26	10	6	10	40	40	+0	36	W	L	W	D	D			
13 Blackburn Rovers	25	8	8	9	35	33	+2	35	W	L	W	L	L			
14 Blackpool	26	8	10	8	43	38	+5	34	D	L	D	L	W			
15 Charlton Athletic	26	8	9	9	34	36	-2	33	W	D	L	L	L			
16 Bolton Wanderers	26	8	8	10	39	40	-1	32	L	W	L	L	W			
17 Huddersfield Town	26	8	8	10	31	43	-12	32	L	D	D	D	L			
18 Wolverhampton ...	26	9	4	13	32	38	-6	31	L	L	L	L	W			
19 Ipswich Town	26	8	6	12	27	48	-21	30	L	W	W	D	L			
20 Birmingham City	26	7	8	11	33	42	-9	29	L	L	W	D	D			
21 Peterborough U...	26	8	1	17	37	49	-12	25	W	L	W	W	W			
22 Sheffield Wedn...	26	7	4	15	28	42	-14	25	L	D	W	W	W			
23 Bristol City	25	6	4	15	38	50	-12	22	L	W	D	L	W			
24 Barnsley	26	5	6	15	26	43	-17	21	L	L	L	W	L			

Greece Super League																
	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts	Last5games		Most recent first					
1 Olympiakos Piraeus	15	12	3	0	35	10	+25	39	W	D	W	D	W			
2 PAOK	15	9	4	2	21	9	+12	31	W	W	D	D	L			
3 Asteras Tripolis	15	7	4	4	19	10	+9	25	L	D	D	W	W			
4 Atromitos	15	6	7	2	15	12	+3	25	D	W	D	W	L			
5 Levadiakos	15	6	3	6	11	12	-1	21	W	L	W	W	W			
6 PAS Giannina	15	6	3	6	15	14	+1	21	L	W	L	W	W			
7 Panionios	15	7	0	8	17	20	-3	21	L	L	L	L	W			
8 Panthrakikos	15	6	2	7	16	16	+0	20	W	W	D	W	D			
9 Panathinaikos	15	5	7	3	16	15	+1	20	L	D	W	L	W			
10 OFI	15	4	5	6	16	18	-2	17	W	D	L	L	L			
11 Plataniás	15	4	4	7	13	18	-5	16	L	D	L	W	L			
12 Xanthi	15	3	6	6	11	16	-5	16	D	W	D	L	D			
13 Veria	15	3	6	6	10	17	-7	15	W	D	D	D	L			
14 Aris	15	2	7	6	12	22	-10	13	D	D	D	L	L			
15 AEK Athens	15	3	3	9	11	17	-6	12	D	L	W	L	W			
16 Kerkyra	15	2	6	7	7	19	-12	12	L	L	L	D	L			

TURKEY Süper Lig																
	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts	Last5games		Most recent first					
1 Galatasaray	17	9	6	2	34	20	+14	33	D	W	D	W	D			
2 Beşiktaş	17	8	6	3	38	25	+13	30	W	D	D	W	W			
3 Antalyaspor	16	9	3	4	28	21	+7	30	W	D	W	D	L			
4 Fenerbahçe	17	7	6	4	25	19	+6	27	L	L	W	D	W			
5 Eskişehirspor	17	6	6	5	32	23	+9	24	L	D	D	D	W			
6 Bursaspor	17	5	9	3	26	20	+6	24	D	W	D	D	D			
7 Trabzonspor	17	6	6	5	19	15	+4	24	D	L	D	W	L			
8 Karabükspor	17	7	3	7	23	26	-3	24	W	W	W	L	L			
9 Kasımpaşa	17	6	5	6	24	20	+4	23	L	L	D	D	D			
10 Sivasspor	17	6	4	7	21	24	-3	22	W	L	L	L	W			
11 Gençlerbirliği	17	4	9	4	25	26	-1	21	D	D	D	L	L			
12 İstanbul BB	17	6	3	8	19	20	-1	21	W	W	L	W	L			
13 Orduspor	17	4	8	5	19	19	+0	20	D	D	L	L	D			
14 Gaziantepspor	17	5	5	7	16	24	-8	20	W	D	L	D	W			
15 Kayserispor	17	5	4	8	22	29	-7	19	L	W	D	D	L			
16 Elazığspor	17	3	7	7	11	27	-16	16	L	D	W	W	L			
17 Mersin İdmanyurdu	17	3	6	8	18	27	-9	15	L	D	W	L	L			
18 Akhisar Beledi...	16	2	6	8	11	26	-15	12	D	L	D	L	L			

HOLLAND Eredivisie



Last5games

Most recent first

	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts								
1 PSV	18	13	1	4	60	18	+42	40	W	D	W	L	L			
2 Twente	18	12	4	2	35	14	+21	40	W	W	L	W	D			
3 Ajax	18	10	7	1	42	20	+22	37	D	W	W	W	W			
4 Feyenoord	18	11	4	3	37	23	+14	37	W	D	W	D	W			
5 Vitesse	18	10	5	3	34	18	+16	35	L	D	L	W	L			
6 Utrecht	18	8	6	4	24	19	+5	30	D	W	D	W	L			
7 NEC	18	6	6	6	24	30	-6	24	L	D	L	D	W			
8 ADO Den Haag	18	5	8	5	30	29	+1	23	W	L	D	L	W			
9 RKC Waalwijk	18	5	7	6	24	22	+2	22	D	W	D	L	D			
10 Heracles	18	4	8	6	35	35	+0	20	D	L	D	L	D			
11 Groningen	18	5	5	8	18	28	-10	20	L	D	L	W	D			
12 AZ	18	4	6	8	23	32	-9	18	L	W	D	L	L			
13 Heerenveen	18	4	6	8	27	38	-11	18	W	D	L	D	L			
14 PEC Zwolle	18	3	6	9	17	29	-12	15	D	D	D	D	D			
15 Roda JC	18	3	6	9	22	37	-15	15	W	D	D	L	L			
16 VVV	18	3	6	9	22	38	-16	15	L	D	W	D	D			
17 NAC Breda	18	3	5	10	15	37	-22	14	L	D	D	D	L			
18 Willem II	18	2	6	10	16	38	-22	12	D	L	D	W	D			

WELLINGTON PHOENIX

Westpac STADIUM

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SEASON 2012/13



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Back row (left to right): Ben Sigmund, Hamish Watson (Football School of Excellence), Paul Iffill, Stein Huysegens, Jeremy Brockie, Andrew Durante (captain), Michael Boxall, Alec Solomons (FSE), Tobias Bertsch (FSE), Tom Doyle (FSE), Tony Lochhead.

Middle row (left to right): Jimmy Downey, Vince Lia, Alex Smith, Wayne Roberts (physio), Chris Greenacre (assistant coach), Ricki Herbert (head coach), Jonathan Gould (goalkeeping coach), Lee Spence (strength and conditioning coach), Russell Gray (kit manager), Cameron Lindsay, Tom Biss (FSE).

Front row (left to right): Benjamin Totori, Luke Rowe (FSE), Leo Bertos, Justin Gulley (FSE), Scott Basalaj (FSE), Mark Paston, Glen Moss, Manny Muscat, Dani Sanchez, Tyler Boyd, Louis Fenton.